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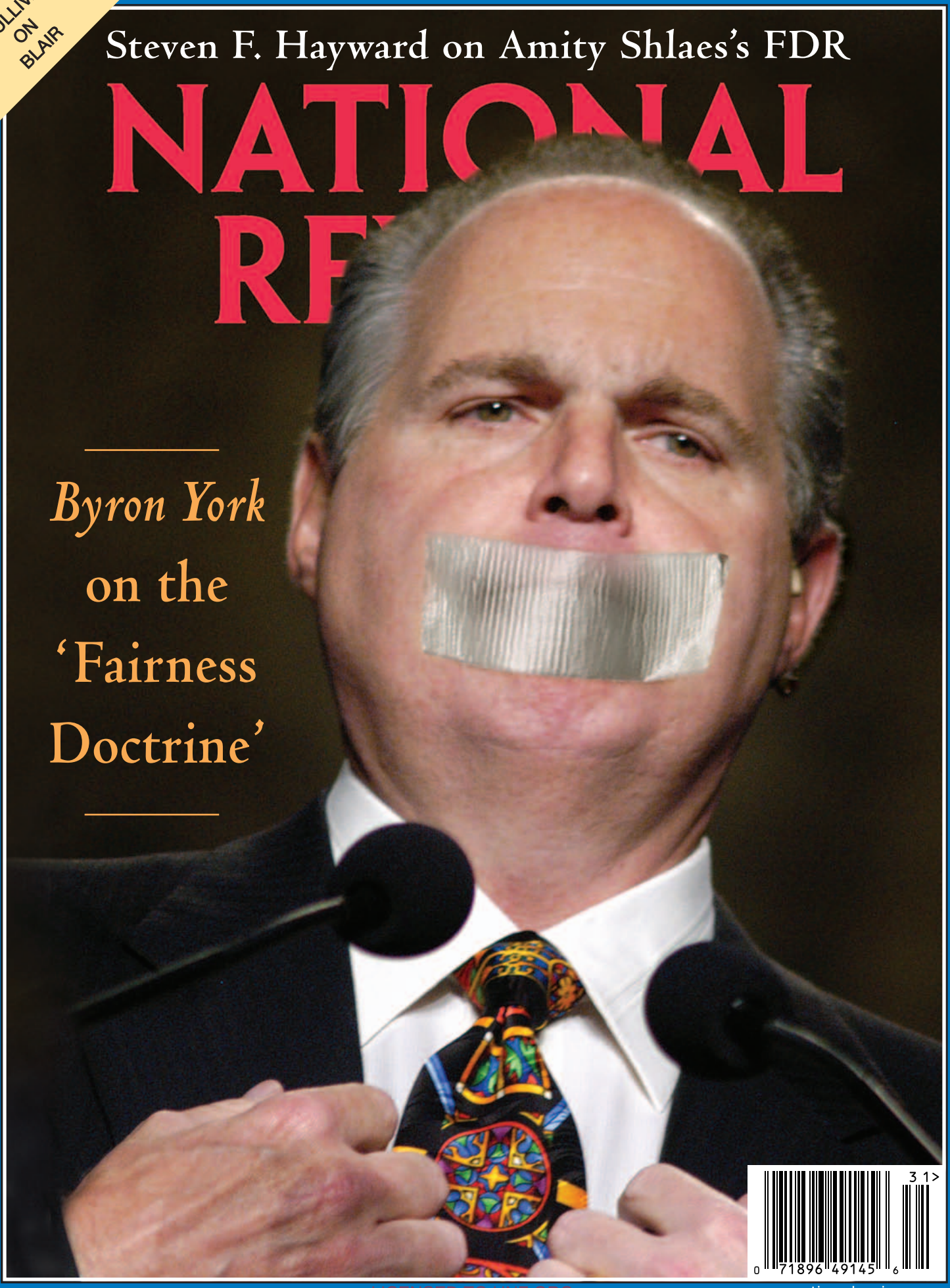
Steven F. Hayward on Amity Shlaes's FDR

NATIONAL RE

Byron York on the 'Fairness Doctrine'



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NATIONAL REVIEW

JULY 30, 2007 VOL. LIX, NO. 13

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■ COVER STORY

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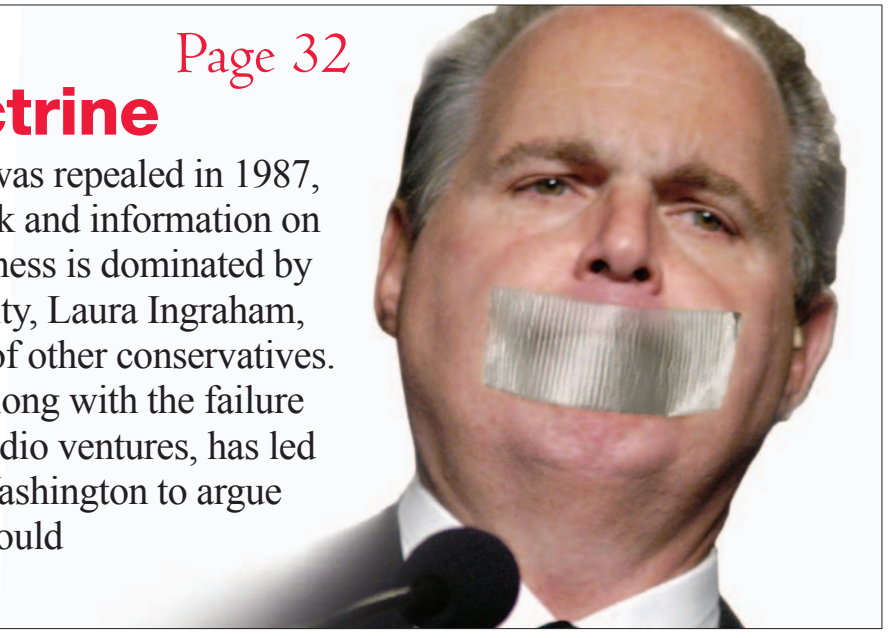
An Unfair Doctrine

After the Fairness Doctrine was repealed in 1987, there was an explosion of talk and information on the radio, and today the business is dominated by Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Laura Ingraham, Bill Bennett, and a long list of other conservatives. Their commercial success, along with the failure of a number of liberal talk-radio ventures, has led some influential people in Washington to argue that the Fairness Doctrine should be revived. *By Byron York*



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letters to the editor

SPACED OUT

David Pryce-Jones quite rightly describes Kurt Waldheim as one of the most despicable and despised figures in the West since 1945 ("A 20th-Century Career," July 9). But, in the end, Waldheim may have the last laugh on all of us.

Even as I write, Waldheim's words are headed for the stars on the most distant man-made object in space. How did this absurdity come about? When Waldheim was still secretary-general of the U.N., his words were printed on the "Golden Records" placed aboard the two Voyager crafts, launched in 1977.

How terrible that Waldheim "speaks for humanity" to whatever intelligent life should come across those records and decipher their messages.

H. Norman Whitely
Seattle, Wash.

PARISIAN PHILOSOPHER

Paris Hilton, that "silly and pointless" lass, may find her end in obscurity, as Rob Long points out ("American Party Girl," July 9).

If she does slide alone into the dark night like Willy Loman, it is worth remembering that all but a few of us will find our rest in relative obscurity, without a Nobel prize or world-changing company to our name. It isn't how Paris will die, but how she can afford to be "utterly pointless" during her life, that so fascinates us. In a broader sense, because she represents a cultural evolution affecting a growing portion of America, she is very instructive.

The affluence of American society has shifted more and more people away from a "work is life, life is work" ethos. Some choose pointlessness: drugs, liquor, and sex. Others adopt "religions," be they health and dieting, global warming, Darfur, etc. Some, out of boredom, contrive crazy adventures full of risk. Is this all there is to life, we ask?

At the heart of it all remains our uncertainty about meaning in life. Are there things that possess meaning and purpose external to our assigning them meaning and purpose? In other words, are there things assigned meaning and order by God?

In an age when Americans are rightfully fascinated by Paris Hilton—though they may not know why—the meaning of meaning is obscure. It is the frustrating yet beautiful question we all must ask and hope to answer. I am inclined more often than not to believe that only God could have created a being who asks such questions.

Phil Brand
Arlington, Va.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

As a longtime registered Republican, I wouldn't walk across the street to shake Sen. Ted Kennedy's hand, so what does NATIONAL REVIEW do to me? It puts him in my house via the U.S. Postal Service and the cover of the July 9 edition. Bah, humbug!

Frank M. Cicierega
Duxbury, Mass.

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IT'S 2007, NOT 1977

Don't let Congress bring back failed energy tax policies from the 1970s

The 1970s was a bad decade for fashion, hairstyles and, especially, energy policy.

The '70s brought Americans gasoline price controls, energy taxes and similar policies that led to gasoline shortages, long lines at the pump and double-digit inflation.

So it's puzzling why some in Congress want to bring back 1970s energy policies. They're pushing the same kind of legislation that was so disastrous 30 years ago: new taxes that will restrict energy research, exploration and development – even a blast-from-the-past "windfall profits" tax.

These misguided policy relics will reduce access to energy supplies here at home – all at a time when Americans need more energy, not less. It's time for Congress to focus on securing America's energy future, not bringing back America's energy past.

Tell Congress: It's 2007, not 1977.

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THE WEEK

■ How will history distinguish the Doctors' Plot (British Muslims) from the Doctors' Plot (Soviet Jews)? The Jews were innocent, and the Jews were executed.

■ The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Fred Thompson, in 1991, did some lobbying work for a pro-abortion group. According to the story, he was trying to persuade the first Bush administration to allow federal funds to go to family-planning clinics that made abortion referrals. But Thompson, who is preparing to run for president, denies the story. John Sununu, chief of staff in that administration, denies the story's contention that Thompson lobbied him on the matter. Whatever the truth here, it is clear that Thompson used to believe that abortion should generally be legal. (In a 1994 debate, he said that it should not be criminalized.) His campaign, no doubt mindful of the flak Mitt Romney has caught for flip-flopping on abortion, has been reluctant to acknowledge his pro-choice past. But nobody will suspect Thompson of converting just to position himself for a presidential run, as some people suspect Romney of having done. Thompson voted with pro-lifers during his time in the Senate in the 1990s. Millions of Americans have gotten more pro-life as this country has had more experience with abortion-on-demand, and most of them have never run for anything. Fred Thompson should not hesitate to represent these people.

■ The White House invoked executive privilege to keep two former aides—counsel Harriet Miers and political director Sara Taylor—from having to testify before Congress about the firing of U.S. attorneys. The administration is on solid legal ground. The oversight power of Congress tends to follow its legislative power. In those areas where it has a direct hand, it has a strong claim to exercise oversight of the executive branch. But while congressmen have every right to complain about an administration's personnel decisions, they have no right to legislate in the matter, and an administration has to be able to keep its deliberations about such decisions private. If this question goes before a court, it should not be hard for it to make the right call.

■ While New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg denies that he is running for president, his minions work on the mechanics of a run. *Time* magazine praises his post-partisan accomplishments. Most recently he cast off the GOP label that he adopted only to avoid a bruising Democratic primary in 2001. New York City prospers, and the Giuliani-era plunge in crime rates continues. Why is Bloomberg not presidential timber? Look what he has done on his own, not caretaking a legacy. He won mayoral control of the school board, but left education in the hands of the pedagogical establishment. He has banned smoking and trans-fats. He says he will make the city greener. This is a collection of niggles and non-starters. Politics is partisan because people disagree, and care about their disagreements. In a national race, only Bloomberg's billions would keep his name afloat, barely. Either he knows this and it's all a second-term PR stunt, or 2008 will be consultants' heaven.

ROMAN GENN

See page 8

■ The Red Mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, has two attached seminaries, for male and female religious students. Two brothers who run this establishment have long been fanaticizing these students, of whom there are over 5,000. Their purpose is to install a Taliban-type regime, by force if need be. Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the president, has allowed this challenge to develop, shrugging off attempts on his life, and what are evident preparations for a coup. He's reached the predicament that the Shah of Iran was once in—either to allow the Islamists to take over or to overpower them. Musharraf has chosen to send in the army. One of the brothers tried to flee disguised as a woman and hundreds of students have gone home, but there has also been grim fighting, artillery and machine-gun fire, and scores of casualties. Some consider that Musharraf may have waited too long before

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In the new issue of *Policy Review*

How the West *Really* Lost God

A new look at secularization

What secularization theory assumes is that religious belief comes ontologically first for people and that it goes on to determine or shape other things they do—including such elemental personal decisions as whether they marry and have children. Implied here is a striking, albeit widely assumed, view of how one social phenenomenon powers another: that religious believers are more likely to produce families because religious belief somehow comes first. . . . What has not been explained, but rather assumed throughout that chain of argument, is why the causal relationship between belief and practice should always run that way instead of the other, at least some of the time. . . . In brief, it is not only possible but highly plausible that many Western European Christians did not just stop having children and families because they became secular. At least some of the time, the record suggests, they also became secular because they stopped having children and families.

—Mary Eberstadt

Terrorism, the Military, and the Courts

What kind of process is due detainees?

This essay . . . is for those who live in that gulf between the centers of gravity of elite and mass opinion—those not content to give the president a free hand in a messy, unending quasi-war but also suspicious that courts can and should supervise detentions and interrogations and doubtful that such operations are, in any event, easily subjected to absolute moral rules. This is uncomfortable territory, for the slope is indeed as slippery as slopes get—and slippery, I should say, on a hill with two distinct bottoms. At one lies a government capable of torture with impunity, the very essence of tyranny. At the other lies a government incapacitated from expeditiously taking those steps necessary to protect the public from catastrophic attack. . . . In reality, however, this is the intellectual and practical territory in which wars have been won with liberty preserved.

—Benjamin Wittes

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THE WEEK...

taking action, and that the toll of the dead will hand the country over to Islamists close to the Taliban. The margin of safety is indeed narrow, and should Musharraf prove unable to hold the line, Pakistan might well rank as the most dangerous state in the world.

■ After two car bombs failed to explode in London, and a third car crashed in flames into a terminal building at Glasgow Airport, the would-be mass murderers turned out to be radical Muslims. No surprise there, though many were shocked to find that almost all of them were doctors. But this should be no surprise either. Muslim cultures encourage technical skills, including medicine, that cannot threaten the regime or the faith (Bashar Assad was trained as an ophthalmologist). Western universities want tuitions, and Western health-care systems want tractable doctors. Some percentage of the men thus collected turned to jihadism to minimize the complexities of life. "He was certainly very angry about what was happening in Iraq," said Shiraz Maher, a British defector from radicalism who met one of the bombers in a jihadist student group. "But to say it was just all about Iraq or foreign policy is mistaken. It feeds off a much wider ideological infrastructure."

■ No artsy *Sopranos* ending for *Tomorrow's Pioneers*. The series, a production of Al-Aqsa TV, Hamas's Gaza Strip station, starred Farfour, a Mickey Mouse rip-off, who sang tunes like "Oh, Jerusalem, we are coming. Oh, Jerusalem, it is the time of death." But in the last episode Farfour was beaten to death by an Israeli. "Farfour was martyred defending his land," a human hostess explained for the dumb kids. Mustafa Barghouti, information minister of the Fatah wing of the Palestinian Authority, called it "wrong" for a children's program "to convey political messages." Why? Official Palestinian culture is wall-to-caterwaul denunciation of Israeli evil. A people who are encouraged to dress their tots up in bomber costumes cannot balk at a hate-criminal mouse. The mind of the Palestinian leadership is not "like" the Nazi

KEVIN DIETSCH/UPI

Get Real

REALISM is making a comeback these days. Liberals in particular are embracing an approach to foreign policy that they could once be counted on to denounce righteously. The new realism has even infected the *New York Times*, whose editors now call for withdrawal from Iraq while conceding that this will likely bring regional instability and "further ethnic cleansing, even genocide." The *Times* periodically beats itself up for largely ignoring the Holocaust, and it even gets a bit defensive about the lies it reported during the Soviet forced famines of the 1930s. So it's intriguing to see the Gray Lady insist that America pave the path to genocide, all in the name of realism.

Meanwhile, New Mexico governor Bill Richardson, one of the chief foreign-policy résumé-wavers among the Democratic presidential contenders, calls for a "New Realist vision" (the capitalization is his). This seems to mean that we should do only smart things in foreign policy, i.e., use diplomacy where it will work, military force where it's necessary, and economics everywhere else.

Here we see a major weakness of "realism" as a political buzzword. Who *doesn't* think he's realistic? Who says he's forthrightly opposed to dealing with reality? Even Woodrow Wilson, the most unrealistic president of the 20th century, firmly believed he knew the facts better than anybody else. Nobody claims that we can defeat our enemies by, say, tickling them mercilessly. In practice, a realist is often someone who has lost the foreign-policy argument.

Even on a theoretical level, realism leaves quite a bit to be desired. That's because it is premised on the idea that states follow their interest—narrowly defined—and nothing more. Seeing nations as rational calculators of power, economics, and security leaves out all sorts of things, including fear, pride, and honor. The self-interests of rulers, including the health of their petty egos, have launched wars from time immemorial. Is the tense cold war between the Israelis and the Arabs really in the interest of Arab states? Not by any rational calculation. But that's the point.

An authentic realism would recognize that some states operate according to values other than those glorified by self-described realists. It is they who are the true idealists: They believe not only that everyone should behave according to their principles, but that everyone actually does. Indeed, there is a paradox at the heart of realism. We know that realists think the invasion of Iraq was a mistake because the war wasn't in our national interest. But if states act only in self-interest, why on earth did America invade Iraq?

Many of the same people now believe that a withdrawal from Iraq will be viewed by the world not as a blow to our honor and prestige or a sign of weakness, but as a wise and rational policy correction. That hardly sounds realistic to me.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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The Week...

mind, or "the same kind of thing" as the Nazi mind. It *is* the Nazi mind, with only a few details transposed.

■ The British are stingy when it comes to rewarding writers, and this makes Salman Rushdie's knighthood all the more exceptional. Publication in 1988 of Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* had been taken in some Muslim ruling circles as an insult to Islam, and the knighthood added injury. Rejoicing under the title of patronage secretary, a rather obscure civil servant oversees these matters. He had no suspicion that the award would spark off further foaming of the mouth in several Muslim countries. In their usual style of literary criticism, the mullahs of Iran once again stressed their intention to have Rushdie killed. In Pakistan, the minister for religious affairs—no less—wants apologies from the British government, and reprisals against Rushdie. For this minister, suicide bombing is now justified. A rumor is circulating that Rushdie actually got his title to show the Iranians what the British think about the recent hijacking and humiliation of their sailors in the Gulf. In any case, "Arise, Sir Salman" is a typical, dry, and devastating British understatement.

SARKOZY: DARRIN ZAMMIT LUPI/REUTERS DIAZ: KAREL NAVARRO/AP

■ The French paper *Libération* has published an article headed "Jogging: Is it right-wing?" The article questions President Sarkozy's dedication to jogging, which he does in his much-loved (and much-maligned) NYPD T-shirt. *Le footing*, you see, is supposed to be a right-wing activity. The article sparked a flurry of responses in the press all over the world. Much has been made of the article's anthropological tone, which questions not only the supposedly right-wing qualities of jogging, such as its "individualism" and its contribution to "the cult of performance," but also its efficacy. Popular French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut decried the un-Frenchness of jogging on French television: "Western civilization, in its best sense, was born with the promenade. Walking is a sensitive, spiritual act. Jogging is management of the body. The jogger says, 'I am in control.' It has nothing to do with meditation." We see.

■ Two Cuban democrats and patriots died, in very different circumstances. One died in exile, at almost 100; the other died in the hands of Castro's police, at 47. The first was Emilio Ochoa, called "Millo," who was the last remaining signer of Cuba's 1940 constitution. He had to flee his country in the early 1960s, but, in all the ways available to him, he never stopped fighting for Cuban freedom and democracy. Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R., Fla.) said something remarkable about him: "I have never admired anyone more." The other recent death was that of Manuel Acosta, a member of the dissident group known as "Democracy Movement." The authorities say he hanged himself in his cell, but his friends doubt it—and the government refuses to hand over the corpse for an autopsy. As we know from long experience, suicide in Communist countries can be a strange event. Neither Ochoa's death nor Acosta's merited a peep in the American media, outside of Florida. But Cubans and their well-wishers know who they are, and they mourn their loss.

■ Cameron Diaz, the blonde bombshell of an actress, has been forced to apologize to the nation of Peru. While visiting Machu Picchu, she was spotted wearing a messenger bag emblazoned with a red star and Mao's slogan "Serve the People," a nifty souvenir she picked up while visiting China. The problem, though she knew it not at the time, was that some 69,000 Peruvians were killed during a wave of terror and war in the 1980s and '90s, when the Maoist group Sendero Luminoso—Shining Path—was in its heyday. "I sincerely apologize to anyone I may have inadvertently offended," said the chastened actress to a waiting nation. "The bag was a purchase I made as a tourist in China and I did not realize the potentially hurtful nature of the slogan printed on it." Well, she can always sport that bag in Hollywood (or most anywhere else).

■ Archbishop Pius Ncube, the leader of Zimbabwe's 1 million Catholics, has called on Britain to depose Robert Mugabe. The archbishop's plea, published in the *Times* of London, contained a reprise of much that has gone wrong with Zimbabwe: "People in our mission hospitals are dying of malnutrition. We had the best education in Africa and now our schools are closing. Most people are earning less than their bus fares. There's no water or power." And that is hardly all. Unemployment is at 80 percent. Inflation causes prices to double every week, and the government's attempts to fix prices have caused butchers, bakers, and gas-station operators to work at a loss, close up shop, or face arrest for defying

Socialized Medicine

In Canada, the prudent keep
A vet filed with the V's;
In Britain, when their water breaks,
Expectant mothers freeze.
But sicko Michael Moore, for whom
An appendectomy's
Exciting waiting in a line—
A long one—disagrees.

—W. H. von Dreele

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THE WEEK...

Mugabe's edicts. Consider this, alongside the very real fear of torture and murder that has paralyzed the political opposition, and it is clear the stakes for speaking out in Zimbabwe, as Ncube has admirably done, are very high. "Is the world just going to let everything collapse in on us?" the archbishop asked. Sadly, that is probably just what the world is going to do.

■ Nigerians went to the polls in April. European election observers reported widespread violence prior to the vote, with perhaps 200 people killed by gangs of machete-wielding thugs hired by the candidates. The state-owned News Agency of Nigeria seems to have found independent confirmation of these reports. The price of machetes in several parts of the country fell by as much as 50 percent after the elections, says NAN—from 800 naira to 400 (which is about $3) in one region. The agency quoted a trader grumbling that: "Before the . . . elections, I was selling a minimum of seven machetes daily but can hardly sell one a day now." Ah, Sir, that's democracy for you: There are winners, and there are losers.

■ All hail new national hero Joey Chestnut of San Jose, Calif. In the annual hot-dog-eating contest at Coney Island, Mr. Chestnut dethroned Takeru Kobayashi of Japan, who had won the previous six of these events. The new champion ate 66 hot dogs in 12 minutes, a new world record. Mr. Kobayashi was close behind, but unfortunately suffered a "reversal" (use your imagination) with consequent deduction of points, leaving him in second place. Third place was also taken by an American, solidly confirming our nation's newfound gustatory prowess. U-S-A! U-S-A!

■ Three years after the death of Ronald Reagan, nearly 100 public landmarks are named after him, according to the Reagan Legacy Project. Yet only 13 are schools. That figure may not grow much, judging from trends documented in a new report by the Manhattan Institute. "It is increasingly rare for public schools to be named after presidents—or people, in general—and increasingly common to name schools after natural features," write the authors, based on their study of seven states. As a result, brand-new schools tend to bear bland names such as "Owl Creek" or "Woodgrove," to take a pair of recent examples from Arkansas and Virginia. The impulse is at least partly understandable, because schools are civic symbols and generic names allow school boards to dodge controversies over the worthiness of Confederate leaders and Malcolm X. A confident culture, however, should not have trouble coming up with common heroes. America doesn't need another Forest Glen Middle School. It would do well to have more schools named after the likes of Benjamin O. Davis, Rosa Parks, and Ronald Reagan.

■ Ann Arbor, Mich., is a small citadel of the Left, on a par with Berkeley, Calif., Madison, Wis., and a few other places. But they do have a Fourth of July parade. Not your typical, Norman Rockwell Fourth of July parade, however. This year, we hear, there was a float showing President Bush as a vampire, biting the neck of the Statue of Liberty. Oh, well: At least they like the Statue of Liberty.

■ When the NAACP announced that its 98th annual convention in Detroit would hold a mock funeral for what one nowadays calls "the N-word," our first thought was, *Good luck*. "Nigger" is a linguistic kudzu vine, woven into American English. White use has been banned from polite society, to the extent that *Huckleberry Finn*'s pitiless depiction of the culture and psychology of racism is often yanked from library shelves because Twain's characters speak the way they would have spoken. But "nigger" thrives in rap and hip-hop, as a black-on-black interjection or ordinary noun, a preening low-life high five. This use was the target of the NAACP's ceremony. Although other epithets have become plain names over time—Tory, Methodist—such an evolution is probably impossible for "nigger." It is too much a part of a racial caste system, even a defunct one; irony is not ironic enough, the appropriators are appropriated. So we wish the NAACP good luck.

■ But let's not kill innocent words along with the guilty. Fashion has moved from *colored* to *Negro* to *black* to *African-American*, but sometimes you need the older forms. Vonetta Flowers won a gold medal in the two-woman bobsled at the 2002 Winter Olympics, becoming the first black female winter gold medalist. But TV presenters found themselves calling her the first "African-American woman from any country" to be so successful. Wait, there's more. Lewis Hamilton, this year's hot rookie Formula 1 driver, gets called "African-American," even though he was born in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, England. Yes, we won the Revolutionary War, but really. Now, if golfing great Gary Player (b. Johannesburg) moved, for sentimental reasons, to Augusta, Ga., would that make him a non-African-American African-American . . . ?

■ News from the desiccated, dusty world of Egyptology: A mummy from a tomb discovered over a century ago in Upper Egypt has been identified as that of Hatshepsut, one of the earliest female rulers known to history. Hatshepsut's regnal dates were 1479 to 1458 B.C. Born a princess, she married her half-brother, who subsequently became pharaoh as Thutmose II. When that monarch died, leaving only an infant son, Hatshepsut took power as regent. Six years later she was sufficiently confident to have herself crowned as pharaoh, wearing a false beard for the purpose. She ran a vigorous administration, though there has been some scan-

KRISTIN CALLAHAN/ACE

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THE WEEK...

dalized muttering in Egyptological circles about her relationship with Senenmut, the royal steward. Plainly this was a formidable lady. Some papyrus scrolls covered with hieroglyphics found near Hatshepsut's sarcophagus have not yet been fully deciphered, but appear to be the billing records of a law firm . . .

■ Among the terrors of nature, we have always been told, is the piranha fish of South America. You know how it goes: You fall off your canoe into the Amazon, there is at once a fearsome swarming and thrashing, and when your companions try to retrieve you, they find nothing but stripped bones. Well, apparently that is all nonsense. The piranha, says ichthyologist Anne Magurran of Scotland's St. Andrews University, is a meek little fellow, dining on plants, insects, and lesser fish, and shoaling with other piranhas only for protection against predators. Predators! Now while of course knowledge is better than ignorance, and it is grand that science has uncovered the truth about piranhas, dispelling the mists of superstition and so forth, is there anyone who, having learned this fact, does not feel that the world is a slightly less colorful place, and himself a little poorer?

■ N.B.: WFB's column is on hiatus. Hence, no "On the Right" offerings in our back pages. But he has a few new books in the works—so please stay tuned.

AT WAR

The Panic Caucus

PANICS have a logic of their own. Once they ripple through a crowd, all reason is discarded. The Senate Republican caucus is in a panic at the moment, its members elbowing one another aside to follow Richard Lugar in calling for a change of strategy in the Iraq War.

They aren't yet ready to endorse Democratic legislation explicitly calling for immediate withdrawals, but many of them—including another star dissident, Sen. Pete Domenici—are endorsing the Salazar-Alexander bill to write into law the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group toward the goal of ending our combat role in Iraq by the close of March 2008.

They are worried about their poll ratings. But winning in Iraq is more important, and they are misreading the politics in any case. If they force a premature drawdown, they will get no credit for belatedly endorsing the Democrats' position, and will share blame for the deterioration in conditions in Iraq that will inevitably occur throughout 2008.

It is folly to dismiss the surge as a failure. It has, unevenly, brought down the number of sectarian killings in Baghdad and the number of civilian casualties around the country. Most important, it has helped turn the tide against al-Qaeda in Iraq, as Sunni tribes side with us against the terror group.

Critics of the surge point to increased U.S. casualties and the failure of the central government to meet political "benchmarks" by passing important legislation. The increased casualties are the awful but inevitable result of our increased combat operations, and in no way a sign that the surge isn't working. The lack of political progress in Baghdad is disappointing, but has to be kept in perspective. The reason we wanted key pieces of legislation to pass was that we thought they would promote reconciliation with the Sunnis and split some of them from the insurgency. That has happened anyway, without the meeting of "benchmarks."

Everyone in the American political debate professes to want to fight al-Qaeda in Iraq, but now that we are finally doing it effectively Democrats and some Republicans are all but ignoring it.

This is an extremely consequential development. To build on it, the central government will indeed have to share resources equitably with the Sunnis, but that is going to be a difficult step. Critics of the war seem to forget that this is a country that is, at best, just beginning to step back from the intense sectarian conflict of 2006. It will take time to heal those wounds. Our role is to provide the security that is a necessary condition for political reconciliation.

In the meantime, we are dealing al-Qaeda in Iraq serious blows. Everyone in the American political debate professes to want to fight al-Qaeda in Iraq, but now that we are finally doing it effectively Democrats and some Republicans are all but ignoring it. Defeating al-Qaeda should be our minimum goal in Iraq no matter what broader policy we choose, whether it is simply a U.S. bugout, a so-called soft partition, or the eventual establishment of a stable, self-sufficient government. If we draw down now, we would give back our hard-won progress against al-Qaeda.

But opponents of the war are now willing to retreat from Iraq, no matter what the consequences. A *New York Times* editorial calling for a withdrawal had this extraordinarily candid passage:

> Americans must be clear that Iraq, and the region around it, could be even bloodier and more chaotic after Americans leave. There could be reprisals against those who worked with American forces, further ethnic cleansing, even genocide. Potentially destabilizing refugee flows could hit Jordan and Syria. Iran and Turkey could be tempted to make power grabs. Perhaps most important, the invasion has created a new stronghold from which terrorist activity could proliferate.

That is what the panicked Republicans are steering us toward. Unless and until they get a grip, President Bush must do all he can to resist them.

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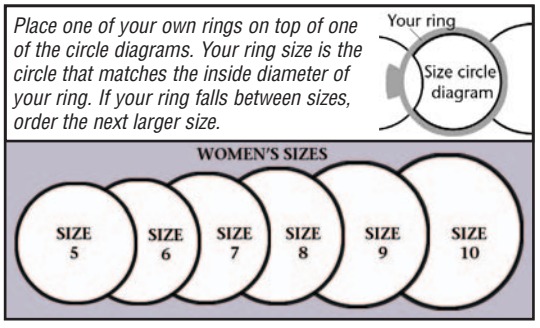

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PUBLIC POLICY

Immigration Reform, For Real

For months, the establishment dismissed those of us opposed to amnesty as a tiny minority of the public and the Congress. Ultimately, that "tiny minority" outnumbered the pro-amnesty forces in the Senate, dealing a humiliating and well-deserved defeat to President Bush. The same White House that insisted that there was no realistic alternative to "comprehensive immigration reform" had better recalibrate its realism now. There always were better alternatives, and the president and his party have no way out of the immigration morass he has created unless they pursue them.

Nor has the country. The public is rightly dismayed at our incapacity to exercise a key attribute of sovereignty: control of the borders. For decades, our elected officials have passed immigration laws that they lack the political will to enforce. Among the fallacies of "comprehensive reform" was the notion that this situation could be fixed instantaneously. It cannot. But by rejecting a solution that would make the problem worse, we may have taken the first of many steps toward a better immigration system.

The next step ought to be President Bush's. As divisive as this debate has been, it did reveal a consensus on the need to enforce current laws. The president should accept that consensus and act on it. If necessary, he should request additional authority and resources for the purpose.

Under current law, the border can be secured and the administration can crack down on scofflaw employers. Contractors can be required to enroll in the government's employee-verification system as a condition of doing business with the federal government. The Social Security Administration identifies tens of thousands of W-2 forms with false or stolen Social Security numbers. The IRS can fine employers who file a significant number of such forms.

In arguing for the comprehensive reform, homeland-security chief Michael Chertoff said that his department needed data from the Social Security Administration to enforce the law on employers. There never was any need to hold that simple reform hostage to amnesty, and the president should ask Congress to enact it now. He should also clarify that state and local law-enforcement agencies have the constitutional authority to make arrests for violations of federal immigration laws.

Bush could also learn from some of the amendments offered during the recent debate. Court-ordered restrictions on deportation should, where possible, be eased. "Sanctuary cities" ought to be penalized. So should visitors who overstay their visas.

The president's error has been to regard controlling immigration and welcoming newcomers as polar opposites. But a sensible control of immigration would provide both an economic basis for new immigrants to succeed—low-end wages would rise—and a political basis for them to be greeted warmly. And in any case, Republicans who seek their own political health no longer have a choice in the matter.

Those who profit from porous borders took a risk when they broached the topic of comprehensive reform: that the public, long inattentive to the causes of our failing policy, might start taking a closer look. It is going to be much harder for the political class to follow its accustomed course. If the president charts a new one, he will have the support of the public and even some Democrats. If Congress balks, he will have in his hands a winning issue. That would be a nice change of pace, wouldn't it?

THE WHITE HOUSE

Bush and Libby

We have urged President Bush to pardon I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby from the moment a jury found the former Cheney chief of staff guilty of perjury and obstruction in the CIA-leak case. The president didn't go as far as we would have liked, choosing to commute Libby's prison term while leaving his conviction, fine, and probation intact. But his action ensures that Libby will not go to jail.

There were a lot of reasons that presidential clemency was appropriate. The first is that the CIA-leak investigation was a fundamentally political exercise from Day One. Even before the appointment of special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald in December 2003, Justice Department investigators knew that it was State Department official Richard Armitage, not Libby, who originally leaked the identity of CIA employee Valerie Plame Wilson. The Justice Department also knew enough to conclude that Libby had not violated the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, the law at issue in the case. Lacking proof that an underlying crime took place, and knowing the source of the leak, the Justice Department should have shut down the investigation then and there.

But Democrats in Congress, many members of the press, and the president's adversaries within the executive branch agitated for a larger investigation. And in a dreadfully misguided move, attorney general John Ashcroft and other top Justice Department officials chose to appoint a special prosecutor. At that point, the investigation took on the kind of life of its own that we saw in the old independent-counsel days. Libby was eventually charged with perjury. He was the only person accused in the case.

Libby had a credible defense. The perjury charge was based on discrepancies between Libby's grand-jury testimony and that of a few journalists who contradicted him. Libby's attorneys argued that the discrepancies could be explained by differences in memory. Although the jury disagreed, a reasonable person listening to the faulty memories of the witnesses who testified could have concluded that Libby simply had things mixed up.

Finally, after the guilty verdict, Fitzgerald argued that the judge should sentence Libby as though Libby had been convicted of leaking Mrs. Wilson's identity. He accepted Fitzgerald's recommendations, sentencing Libby to 30 months in jail. In our view, that was clearly excessive.

Now that President Bush has commuted that sentence, his critics are howling, throwing out the kind of overheated rhetoric that gave birth to the special prosecutor's investigation in the first place. But the president took care to point out that he respects the jury's verdict, and that Libby's conviction still

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stands. And no one could deny that Libby, who will still have to pay a $250,000 fine, who will likely be disbarred, and who lost his high position in government, has paid a heavy price.

We wish the president had chosen a pardon. But as it is, he has removed the most onerous burden facing Libby as a result of this strange and maddening case, and for that we applaud him.

OBITUARY

Beverly Sills, R.I.P.

She was in the curious position of being tremendously famous and underrated. She was penalized by critics, I believe, because of her wide celebrity: She guest-hosted for Johnny Carson; she appeared with the Muppets; she was on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*. It was all a bit suspect. Plus, she was not a European exotic, but a redheaded Jewish girl from Brooklyn. She was also utterly at ease with herself.

And Beverly Sills was a great singer, a lyric and coloratura soprano for the ages. She had a technique that few could match. She had abundant musical intelligence (and other intelligence). And, of course, she had more personality than is rightfully allotted to any one person.

All of us who heard her in the flesh were lucky. For the rest, they can turn to the CDs. Sills herself said (and I paraphrase), "If they ever ask what all the fuss was about, simply tell them: Listen to the recordings."

Her story is well-known, and I will touch on it lightly: Born Belle Silverman in 1929. Child radio star. Student of "Miss Liebling"—Estelle Liebling, who had coached Galli-Curci. You were supposed to go to Europe to get your training and make your career, but Sills was American-bred, one of the first.

A prima donna of New York City Opera, in particular, she was a key participant in the bel canto revival, along with Callas, Sutherland, and Horne. She and Horne had a spat at La Scala, and the two of them would have unpleasant things to say about each other. This pained those who admired them both.

Sills's path, you may recall, was not always strewn with roses. She and her husband, Peter Greenough, had two children, a daughter and a son. The daughter, called Muffy, was (is) deaf; she would also be afflicted with multiple sclerosis, and confined to a wheelchair. The son, called Bucky, was (is) severely mentally disabled, and has had to be cared for in an institution. It has frequently been remarked that neither child ever heard their mother sing a note. But Sills seemed to sail through everything, with poise and grace.

She retired relatively early, at 51, not wanting to hang on too long. She never sang again—not in the shower, not in the car, not under her breath, as she walked down the street—except once: "when President Reagan asked me to." But she was always very busy, living life to the fullest.

One time, she told me she had recently lunched with Renata Tebaldi, the great Italian soprano (since deceased). "So, Renata, how are you? How do you spend your days?" she'd asked. Tebaldi responded, "I listen to my records and cry."

Sills was never like that. In her post-singing days, she was general director of City Opera, chairman of Lincoln Center, chairman of the Metropolitan Opera. She was also a champion fundraiser, raising a hundred million for the March of Dimes, and hundreds of millions more for other causes. And for many years she served as devoted nurse to her husband, who died last September.

It was always a kick to see her, in an opera house or a concert hall. I'll tell you a story (or two). One night, the New York Philharmonic had played the *Rosenkavalier* Suite, and I said to her, "Didn't it kill you not to hear the words? Didn't you want to bust out with, 'In Gottes namen!'?" She smiled and confided she had always wanted to sing the Marschallin—it was the only such regret she had about her career. Once, she pleaded with Bernstein to assign her the role. He said no: "Sophie" (the other, lighter, higher soprano in *Der Rosenkavalier*).

Bill Buckley once described her as "the most unhurried person alive," and that was a keen observation. She was amazingly unhurried. She gave the impression of an unusual self-mastery. And she was a beautiful, beautiful speaker, expressing herself in perfect, natural, seamless English. Seldom have I encountered such an articulate person. You could transcribe an hour of her, and send it straight to the presses.

Bill Buckley once described her as 'the most unhurried person alive,' and that was a keen observation. She was amazingly unhurried. She gave the impression of an unusual self-mastery.

And she always retained her Brooklyn accent. Many American singers have a semi-British, artificial English that I call "the opera voice." (High, high palate.) But Sills sounded real (and you can hear on the recordings that her grasp of other languages was superb).

What's more, she was terribly funny. At a gala a few years ago, they showed an old television clip of her, singing. After the lights went up, the emcee said, "So, Beverly, what do you think?" She said, "I couldn't stop staring at my waist." During a 2003 interview with me, she said of her career, "It feels as if it happened to someone else. I see pictures and think, 'Who is that girl? I don't even know her anymore.' Skinny face" (and here she patted her cheeks, sucking them in a little).

I could keep you here for ten more pages, dropping Sills crumbs, but I will finish with this: The last time I saw her was at a party earlier this year. She looked beautiful, radiant (and so did her daughter, Muffy). She was lively and serene at the same time, her special combination. And everything she said was instructive and fascinating.

The subject of Georg Solti, the late Hungarian conductor, came up. "You're looking at the girl who broke his hand!" Oh? Do tell. It seems that he chased her around a grand piano—not for any artistic purpose—and she slammed the lid on that hand. He did not conduct that night.

When she died on July 2, she left mourners and celebrators, and they were the same people. She was a great singer and a great lady. The world loved her, and the world—at least this once—was absolutely right.

—JAY NORDLINGER

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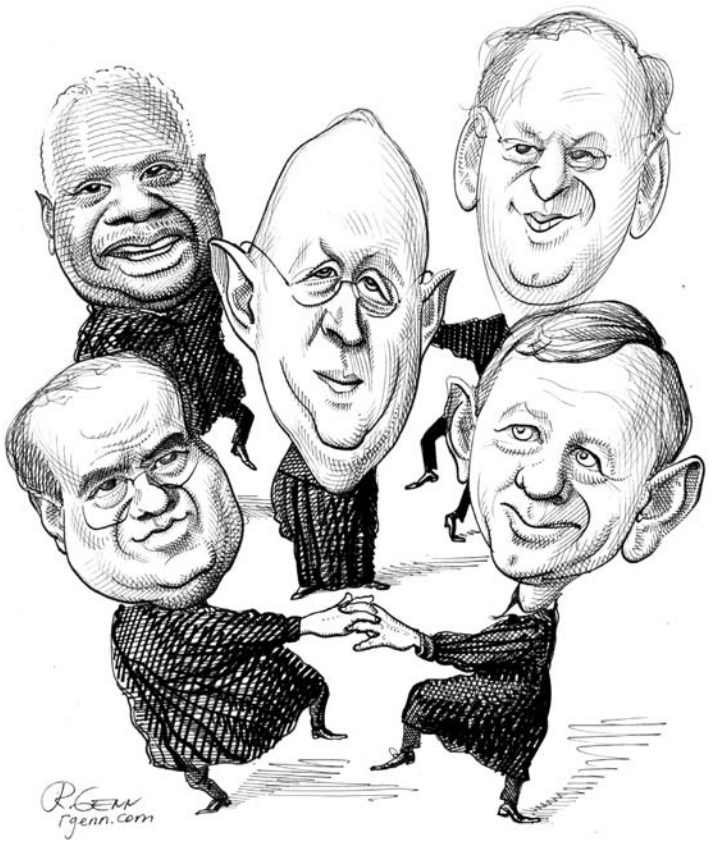

The conservatives dance delicately around Justice K.

■ THE SUPREME COURT ■

4 + 1

And the 1 is Justice Anthony Kennedy

ROBERT H. BORK

CONSERVATIVES are exulting in the Supreme Court's move to the right, after Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito came on board to reinforce the beleaguered Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. Liberals agree on the movement but not its desirability. Thus, the indomitable Linda Greenhouse warns readers of the *New York Times* of "the powerful five-justice conservative bloc that has marched in lock step through much of the term, bent on reshaping the law and, in several important areas, well on the way toward doing so." Frightening the semi-informed with visions of a reactionary judicial junta is good fun, and often effective—if less than admirable—politics.

But an examination of the end-of-term constitutional decisions suggests that both conservative exultation and liberal panic are, to say the least, premature. Justice Anthony Kennedy, the fifth vote that conservatives and liberals both seek, is not by any stretch of the imagination a constitutional conservative. Far from being a member of a "bloc," Kennedy swings from side to side in the manner of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Not only has he been in the majority in all the five-to-four decisions this past term, many of which were liberal victories, but he has, for example, endorsed the essentials of *Roe* v. *Wade*, written opinions creating special rights for homosexuals, struck down attempts to limit pornography, increased restrictions on capital punishment, relied upon foreign law and U.N. resolutions, and openly claimed the power to control the destiny of the country.

But the news may be worse than that, for it is not yet clear how vigorous the newest members of the Court, Roberts and Alito, will be in adhering to its original principles as the only legitimate approach to the Constitution. Three end-of-term decisions raise at least occasion for speculation that Roberts and Alito may be willing to make only minor adjustments to liberal doctrines that have no basis in the Constitution. If so, they would follow in a long line of Republican appointees who turned either moderately or extremely liberal on the bench: Warren, Brennan, Blackmun, Powell, Stevens, O'Connor, Kennedy, and Souter. Others, such as Harlan and Burger, are harder to classify but did little to overturn liberal travesties of the past.

In *Hein* v. *Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc.*, the Court faced the question of what to do about *Flast* v. *Cohen*, a 1968 Warren Court decision holding that taxpayers have standing to challenge the expenditure of public funds in a manner alleged to violate the First Amendment's prohibition of the establishment of religion. The law had long held that plaintiffs had no standing as taxpayers to challenge alleged violations of any provision of the Constitution. *Flast*'s exception for spending related to religion lacked any coherent rationale.

The taxpayer in *Hein* objected to President George W. Bush's creation of a program to ensure that faith-based community groups can compete for federal financial support. The Court denied standing because *Flast*'s program was funded by a specific congressional appropriation and mandate, while the spending in *Hein* came out of general appropriations without a specific congressional mandate. The basis for a constitutional distinction between congressional and presidential spending is, to say the least, elusive. The plurality opinion was written by Justice

ROMAN GENN

Mr. Bork is a former judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals (D.C. Circuit) and a fellow at the Hudson Institute.

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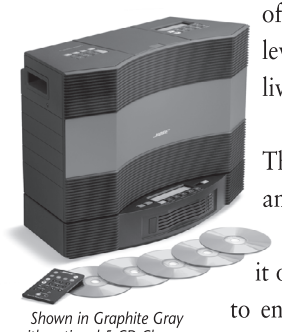

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Alito and joined by Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Kennedy.

Justice Scalia's concurrence, speaking of the plurality's "utterly meaningless distinctions," argued that either *Flast* must be expanded to confer taxpayer standing whenever spending of tax revenues is alleged to violate any constitutional provision specifically limiting the taxing and spending power, or *Flast* should be overruled. Of the plurality's irrational whittling of *Flast*, he wrote, "Minimalism is an admirable judicial trait, but not when it comes at the cost of meaningless and disingenuous distinctions that hold the sure promise of engendering further meaningless and disingenuous distinctions in the future. The rule of law is ill served by forcing lawyers and judges to make arguments that deaden the soul of the law, which is logic and reason." That comment seems irrefutable.

A similar Roberts-Alito problem arose in *Federal Election Commission* v. *Wisconsin Right to Life, Inc.* Wisconsin Right to Life (WRTL) started to broadcast advertisements telling voters to contact Wisconsin senators Russ Feingold and Herb Kohl to urge them to oppose a filibuster to block federal judicial nominees. The difficulty was that if the ads continued to be broadcast, they would have been on the air within 30 days of the primary election and 60 days of the general election, and mentioned Feingold—who was seeking re-election. Recognizing that the ads would be illegal electioneering communications under the McCain-Feingold Act, WRTL sued, alleging a violation of its First Amendment rights. The Supreme Court agreed.

Just three terms before, however, the Court had held—in *McConnell* v. *Federal Election Commission*—that McCain-Feingold, on its face, did not violate the Constitution. The chief justice and Justice Alito distinguished that precedent on the ground that WRTL mounted a challenge to the act as applied. Justice Scalia, joined by Justices Kennedy and Thomas, rejoined that "seven Justices of this Court, having widely divergent views concerning the constitutionality of the restrictions at issue, agree that the opinion effectively overrules *McConnell* without saying so. . . . This faux judicial restraint is judicial obfuscation." That verdict seems entirely just. *McConnell* should have been explicitly overruled.

The most dismaying performance by the new justices, however, came in *Morse* v. *Frederick*. At an event sponsored and supervised by his high school, student Joseph Frederick unfurled a 14-foot banner reading "Bong Hits 4 Jesus." The school principal confiscated the banner and suspended Frederick for ten days. He sued. So perverse has First Amendment law become that the principal, Deborah Morse, had to defend her action on the ground that the banner promoted the use of illegal drugs. The Supreme Court, five to four, upheld the principal in an opinion by Chief Justice Roberts, but did so on the flimsy defense advanced by Morse. Worse, Justice Alito, joined by Justice Kennedy, joined the opinion "on the understanding that (a) it goes no further than to hold that a public school may restrict speech that a reasonable observer would interpret as advocating illegal drug use and (b) it provides no support for any restriction of speech that can plausibly be interpreted as commenting on any political or social issue."

In *Morse*, the Court enlarges once more its ever-expanding powers, usurps the authority of other institutions, damages their integrity and competence, and demands social permissiveness as if it were constitutionally mandated.

That position derives from a 1969 opinion by Justice Abe Fortas, upholding the right of public-school students to protest the Vietnam War by wearing black armbands in classrooms. Over Justice Hugo Black's indignant dissent that the Court had taken from school authorities the power to control pupils, Fortas advanced the mindless proposition that neither students nor teachers "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate." In the Bong Hits case, only Justice Clarence Thomas's splendid opinion pointed out the pernicious frivolity of that position. After quoting a law-review article about the social problem—"Once a society that generally respected the authority of teachers, deferred to their judgment, and trusted them to act in the best interest of school children, we now accept defiance, disrespect, and disorder as daily occurrences in many of our public schools"—Thomas wrote: "To elevate . . . impertinence to the status of constitutional protection would be farcical and would indeed be to 'surrender control of the American public school system to public school students.'" Handing grade-school and high-school students the right to use school hours for political and social proselytizing is educational as well as constitutional malpractice.

In *Morse*, the Court, with the agreement of Roberts and Alito, enlarges once more its ever-expanding powers, usurps the authority of other institutions, damages their integrity and competence, and demands social permissiveness as if it were constitutionally mandated.

In partial extenuation of some of these decisions: It may be that Roberts and Alito eschewed clarity and made artificial distinctions in order to hold Kennedy's vote. That supposition is supported by Kennedy's performance in *Parents Involved in Community Schools* v. *Seattle School District No. 1*. That decision, again five to four, struck down racial balancing in public schools allegedly justified by the familiar hoax of the need for "diversity." Though Roberts's opinion for four of the five justices displayed some unfortunate ambiguities, Kennedy's concurrence, which will be the controlling precedent, created a result, but nothing that can be called law. As Manhattan Institute scholar Abigail Thernstrom commented: "Alas, with Justice Kennedy we end up with the court's familiar and utterly unprincipled formula: Racial sorting is sometimes OK, but sometimes not. It all depends."

It is surely premature to judge the performance of Roberts and Alito on the evidence of these decisions. But at the end of this past term, they gave us some cause for worry, particularly since the problem of assuaging Kennedy to get the necessary fifth vote is not going to go away. **NR**

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By John Fleming

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■ AT WAR

Cutthroats in White Coats

On terror and doctors

THEODORE DALRYMPLE

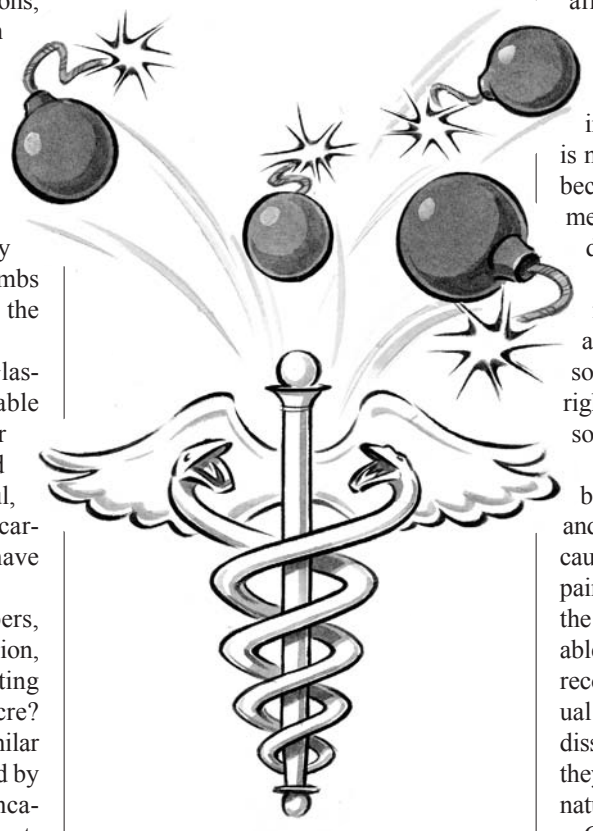
THE British public is by now quite used to thwarted or unsuccessful bomb attacks, and has even come to expect them. Messages relayed repeatedly over the public-address systems in airports, bus and train stations, and elsewhere have accustomed them to the idea that an unaccompanied suitcase or package is likely to be a bomb. Government officials and senior policemen tell us from time to time that bomb attacks at some point in the future are "inevitable," in the same way that Marxists used to say that revolution was "inevitable." Bombs are as much part of modern life as the Internet.

But the attempts in London and Glasgow nevertheless caused considerable outrage, not only, or even mainly, for the loss of life in which they would have resulted had they been successful, but because they were planned and carried out (assuming the authorities have got it right) by doctors.

How, asked the tabloid newspapers, could members of the medical profession, dedicated to saving life and alleviating suffering, go in for random massacre? Many of the general public voiced similar sentiments. As a doctor, I was flattered by the assumption that doctors were incapable of cruelty and evil, and were motivated purely by benevolence, but the historical record demonstrates that doctors are as capable of violence and evil as anyone else.

The roll of doctors who have killed people for selfish or mercenary reasons is considerable. To take only two notorious examples: Dr. Petiot is suspected to have killed 60 people in Paris under the occupation, promising to arrange their escape to South America in return for 25,000 francs, which he pocketed while killing and incinerating them; and Dr. Shipman of Cheshire, England, is thought to have poisoned upwards of 200 patients during his career as a general practitioner, for motives that remain, and will probably forever remain, unclear.

Doctors have also engaged in political violence. Vera Figner, one of the assassins of Czar Alexander II, and a founder of the terrorist organization Narodnaya Volya (People's Will), was a doctor. The role of doctors in Nazi Germany and Japan during the Second World War was not such as to give the profession much cause for pride. Dr. Ernesto "Che" Guevara took an excessive pleasure not only in revolution itself, but in post-revolutionary executions. As for doctor-dictators, of whom there have been a few, they have displayed as much ferocity in suppressing opposition as many of their non-medical colleagues. Perhaps their ferocity derived from the disappointed insight into human nature that medical practice can give. The most prominent doctor-dictator of the present time is Bashar al-Assad, who pursued his ophthalmological studies in London, and (or is it but?) to whom one does not look for humanity.



DARREN GYGI

The question of whether doctors are more or less likely than others to involve themselves in violence is similar to the question of whether they are more or less likely than others to be great writers. Certainly they are more likely than dentists; but the question is a difficult one to answer definitively.

However, speaking personally, I was not at all surprised by the involvement of doctors in Islamist attempted violence in Britain. Osama bin Laden's deputy, after all, is a surgeon. George Habash, the founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and a man of unstintingly violent opinions and inclinations, trained as a pediatrician. It is no more surprising that doctors should become terrorists than that it should be members of the privileged classes who do so; on the contrary.

Doctors are the type of people one might expect to become terrorists: not all or even many doctors, of course, but some, because they have precisely the right psychological "qualifications" to do so.

First, doctors must train themselves to be dispassionate in the face of suffering, and be prepared to do things that might cause their patients discomfort and even pain, for the higher purpose of the good of the patients. The need for doctors to be able to distance themselves in this way is recognized by the old medical-school ritual of throwing medical students into the dissecting room on their first day, so that they learn to master and overcome their natural repugnance.

Clearly, this kind of mastery can tip over quite easily into aggression and sadism, if it is not allied to a very strong moral sense. And since the medical profession is very large worldwide, counting millions, it is inevitable that there should be some among them who are lacking this moral sense.

Second, and more important, there needs to be an ideology to which aggression and sadism can attach, if doctors are to become terrorists. Furthermore, such an ideology is likely to appeal not so

Dr. Dalrymple is a retired prison psychiatrist and a contributing editor of *City Journal*. He is the author, most recently, of *Romancing Opiates: Pharmacological Lies and the Addiction Bureaucracy*.

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The Buddha

About Your Professor

Dr. Malcolm David Eckel is Associate Professor of Religion at Boston University. He earned his Masters in Theology at Oxford and Ph.D. in the study of comparative religion at Harvard. In 1998, Professor Eckel received the Metcalf Award for Teaching Excellence, his university's highest award for teaching.

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much to the uneducated masses, at least to the extent of acting on it, as to the educated classes.

It needs a high degree of abstraction to believe that bombing an airport terminal in Glasgow will conduce to anything but the death of people at random. In their day-to-day dealings, no doubt the plotters were perfectly decent and kindly, possibly even feeling sympathy for the sufferings of the people whom they met in their training and practice as doctors. But just as the dissecting room can overcome natural repugnance, so can an ideology overcome all the social inhibitions against killing people.

As Solzhenitsyn pointed out in a different context, it is ideology that allows people to commit the most terrible acts in the belief that they are bringing about a better world. It blinds them to the most obvious moral considerations; it renders the most absolute evil good.

Islamism is nothing if not an ideology, a poisonous mixture of medieval superstition, sociology, and modern political philosophy. People who plan to set off bombs in airports with cellphones are clearly of the modern world, yet they do so in the hope of bringing about a "return" to an imagined 7th-century paradise. It requires a great deal of education and training to believe such nonsense.

It is rarely, if ever, the uneducated masses who are the most dangerous people. Of course, they are capable of forming mobs that may do a lot of harm locally, and of committing the most horrible atrocities now and again. They may respond violently towards a particular outrage committed by the reigning power; but their violence is rarely sustained.

For revolutionary violence to be sustained, it needs the leadership of an educated minority capable, because of its mental training, of rationalizing almost anything (rationalization is usually a much stronger faculty than rationality). And such violence has not only to be *against* something, because outrage comes in fits and starts and has a tendency to fade, but also *for* something. Only a utopia serves the purpose; and in the days when the Soviet Union was still extant, it lent credibility to the possibility of a Marxist utopia, however wretched it was in practice.

The now-defeated guerrilla movements in Latin America were not spontaneous expressions of rage by the downtrodden; they were expressions of rage by the rapidly expanding class of educated people who realized that their education would not give them the exalted positions in society to which they thought their education entitled them, and to which it would have entitled them only one or two generations earlier. The most vicious of all such movements, be it remembered, Shining Path, was founded by a university professor of philosophy whose doctoral thesis was on Kant, and initially joined by university students who realized that their future in Peru was not necessarily rosy.

Of course, each revolutionary movement uses elements of the culture which preexist it. There is no doubt that Islam is susceptible to violent interpretations of it, using very little by way of rationalization to arrive at the most radical conclusions. In the absence of any living alternative utopian fantasy, Islam fills the bill admirably.

So doctors are precisely the kind of people I would expect to indulge in a plot such as the one that was so narrowly foiled in London and Glasgow. Many young Muslim women whom I treated did not want to speak to Muslim doctors because they thought that such doctors would be more attached to Muslim values than to Hippocratic ones—in other words, that they would reveal their patients' secrets to their families, with horrible consequences for them, if they (the doctors) believed that their patients had violated the Muslim code. Whether the young women were correct in their belief, I cannot say; it is probable that sometimes they were and sometimes they were not. But it does suggest that medical training does not always render a man less susceptible to radical Islam.

Not long before I retired, I walked down the deserted corridor in my hospital. I happened to turn off it into a branch just as a senior physician, a Muslim, and a highly sophisticated and competent man, was speaking to two doctors junior to him.

"Remember," he said to them, "we're doing this for Allah."

I heard no more, but wondered then, and wonder even more now, what "this" actually was. **NR**

■ AT WAR II

Battle of the Narratives

Views on Iraq

BING WEST

Two narratives, closely related, have emerged as favored explanations of the continuing violence in Iraq. One blames it on terrorists bent on exacerbating sectarian tensions; the other, on those supposed age-old religious hatreds, now exacerbated, and impossible to mitigate by the American presence.

Those who hold the first position—let's call them the Anti-Terror Camp—perceive the war to be a cascade of violence emanating from terrorist attacks, and are more apt to believe that removing those terrorists from the picture (with the surge as a vehicle) will cause the wider violence to ebb. Commanders on the ground are exasperated by what they see as a false portrayal of violence's inevitability. "I noticed today that 'a bomb went off in Baghdad,'" Lt. Gen. James Mattis recently commented. "A bombing is reported like it was an act of God. . . . You can see the moral bye—the passive voice given to the enemy's intentional murder."

This, unquestionably, is a response to what might be called the Sectarian Camp, which has painted the troubles of Iraq with broad brushstrokes. Colin Powell took that line on *Meet the Press* recently, asking, "Are we delaying the inevitable conclusion of this civil war that ultimately will be fought out between Sunnis and Shias, Shias and Shias, Sunnis and al-Qaeda?" The Sectarian Camp believes the current surge is too little, too late, because the cancer of hate has already metastasized throughout Iraq's body politic. They believe Iraq is being torn apart by religion, not terrorism. So Hillary Clinton advocates withdrawing U.S. troops from

Mr. West is a former assistant secretary of defense and is at work on his third book about the Iraq War.

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Baghdad and other areas beset by sectarian strife, and Barack Obama argues that Iraq is "a diversion from the fight against the terrorists."

The Anti-Terror Camp still sees the war as winnable. They locate the genesis of sectarian strife in local Sunni insurgent groups' decisions to forge an alliance of convenience with al-Qaeda in Iraq, to rebel against American occupation, and to reject a Shiite-majority democracy. After four years of fighting, many of these rejectionists have reluctantly concluded that they cannot wrest central power from the upstart Shiites. Now, they fear that al-Qaeda in Iraq will become their ruler when the Americans leave.

Anbar, where David Petraeus and Mattis did their counterinsurgency work, has come to epitomize this sentiment. Today, it is conventional wisdom that Anbar improved because the Sunni tribes turned against their erstwhile guests, al-Qaeda in Iraq. True enough, but this is an incomplete explanation. Albeit with too little manpower, the Marines, the Army National Guard, and active-duty soldiers persisted year after year with gritty, relentless patrolling that ultimately convinced the tribes that the American military was, as one tribal leader told me, "the strongest tribe." Hence the tribes could turn against al-Qaeda, knowing they had the strongest tribe standing behind them.

But why join "the strongest tribe" if it is migrating back to the States? In Anbar, the Marines are trying to cement relations between the tribes, the police chiefs, and the local Iraqi Army battalion commanders so that, with American advisers, they will support one another—and be supported by the Shiite-dominated central government. In the judgment of John Allen, the Marine brigadier general who leads the effort to coordinate the tribes in Anbar, "They expect their government to assist in rebuilding their cities and giving their children a better life. They . . . expect to have their own young men and women incorporated into this security."

The Anbar narrative points toward the possibility of strong self-rule in a Sunni province. This is a bottom-up approach toward reconciliation, at least as important as the compromise legislation inching down through the National Assembly in the sheltered Green Zone. Bottom-up or top-down, though, the onus falls on the central government to deliver a modicum of resources. In Anbar, the government has shown a willingness—with American prodding—to do so.

The surge is the generals' attempt to apply the Anbar strategy to the Shiite militias. Underpinned by the belief that the Shiite death squads, like the Sunni al-Qaeda in Iraq, must be destroyed, the surge proceeds on the hope that most militias can be reconciled to a civil order. The best hope is that those irretrievably bent on terrorism are small in number and can be removed from the mainstream, setting Iraq on a course to emerge as a pluralistic, democracy-based society, albeit plagued with intermittent violence, such as, say, Colombia.

Here is where the surge collides with the Sectarian Camp's dogma, that confronting terrorists is not tantamount to ending violence endemic in Iraqi society. "This is an Iraqi problem . . . we cannot save the Iraqis from themselves," Hillary Clinton has said. "I think I have a lot of support among general officers and military experts that [the surge is not] going to work."

Politicians and the public alike would do well to listen to Petraeus before reaching conclusions.

Indeed, there are distinguished generals, experienced policymakers, and disquieting incidents that support that view. In February, I visited Salman Pak, a staunch Sunni enclave on the southern outskirt of Baghdad, and the sectarian hostility was palpable. When I went back in April, the American advisers proudly announced that progress had been made under a new, nonsectarian Iraqi National Police battalion. Yet in late June, 20 decapitated bodies, presumed to be Shiites, were found there. The nearby presence of Iraqi forces and the efforts of their leaders have not altered the bloodletting between the local communities.

Sunni extremists remain Public Enemy Number One. Their murderous suicide bombers are the provocateurs of the low-grade civil war. By slaughtering Shiites for the crime of heresy, Sunni terrorists erected a wall of distrust early in the war that separated neighborhoods, causing the Shiites to band together out of fear. Every neighborhood then saw punks and toughs grab power by claiming to be the people's guardians. Ethnic cleansing followed. The Sunni middle class chose or were forced to flee, and the Shiite poor occupied the abandoned houses. Petraeus has stopped all this by putting U.S. rifle companies in every district.

Among Shiites, too, there are powerful interests dedicated to sectarian supremacy. Moqtada al-Sadr remains a powerful figure; the American toleration of his burgeoning power in 2003 and 2004, when there were numerous opportunities to remove him, was a crucial mistake. Then, of course, there is Iran, whose influence among the Shiite militias is certainly malign and deserves a strong military response.

What does Petraeus do next? Neither Sunni nor Shiite extremists target one another—the number of firefights in Iraq is astonishingly low. Instead, with small

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New golf club's secret metal may hit too far on some par-4's.

Coating on surface derived from armor-piercing metal used by military.

Largest head size allowed.

Coating on face of new golf club is 70% harder than titanium. Added power, size of head, challenge distance restrictions.

YALESVILLE, CT -- A small company in Connecticut has taken the largest head allowed under the Rules of Golf, and souped it up with a coating derived from a once-secret metal developed by the Department of Defense to pierce enemy armor.

by Charlie Allen

The coating hits with a force twice as hard as steel, 70% harder than titanium.

With that much punch a good golfer could turn some par-4's into par-3's.

That's not what officials had in mind when they set a 460 cc size limit on clubs. Golf officials were trying to restrict distance, and they still are. There is talk of new rules requiring manufacturers to tone down their balls.

Good luck. Manufacturers will always push the envelope, and the maker of this club is no exception. Look what it's done. First, it chooses a club head that goes right to size limit, then it slips in under the radar with a coating that comes from the tips of torpedoes and armor-piercing shells. Nothing wrong here, unless the club provokes a new rule. And it might. Here's how it performed when a pro and other golfers tested it.

20-40 yards farther

One golfer hit seven out of eight shots 20 yards farther with the new club. "I wish I hadn't just spent $400.00 on mine," he said.

A ten-handicapper, who also plays a $400.00 driver, hit the new club *40 yards farther*. He said, "I'm not doing anything. It seems to swing itself."

Another golfer who had just bought a 460 cc driver (they can cost $400.00 to $500.00) wanted to get his money back. A husky golfer who swings at about 120 MPH actually cracked a ball with it. Another golfer hit five of his seven drives from even to ten yards past shots he hit with his own driver, a $449.00 club.

Too powerful for some par-4's

A former PGA pro who played it in California said he had to club-down to a 3-wood on several par-4's. A *21-time* Connecticut long-ball champ said of the 500 drivers he's used over twenty years, this one hit farther with less effort than any of them. One golfer begged the company to let him take it with him for a week in Palm Springs. A low-handicapper curved several shots around imaginary dog legs 220 yards out. The club's huge sweet spot gave him more room to work the ball from toe to heel.

I asked a Director of the company that developed the club, called the *Controller® 460*, for comments. He lit up.

70% harder than titanium

"This is the driver of all time! Tell me how anything can beat this: A driver with a maxed out head and sweet spot, a coating derived from a metal used by the military to pierce enemy armor -- steel and titanium are too weak to do that -- a clubface twice as hard as steel, 70% harder than titanium, a 45 1/2 inch, 69-gram high-fiber, graphite shaft that cracks through the air like a bull whip. What's left! Look at those shots! That guy over there will shoot scratch golf.

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The company lets you play the Controller® 460 for 30 days risk-free. It is not in stores. Order direct at **1-800-285-3900** (Ask for item # cdtim), or go to **www.ngcgolf.com**, or send your name, address and a check (or cc number and exp. date) to NGC Golf **(Dept. FD-127)**, 60 Church Street, Yalesville CT 06492.

The graphite shaft model costs $119.00; the top-of-the-line TurboTip® graphite shaft costs $139.00. The TurboTip® shaft has a big butt grip for firmer swing control and extra weight in its tip for more club head speed.

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Specify shaft model, right or left-handed, regular or stiff flex. S/h is only $14.95 for one or four clubs. CT add 6% sales tax.

Oh, yes. If you swing at 120 MPH, bring some extra balls.

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numbers, they attack the defenseless. The onus is on American forces to restore security to every district in Baghdad, even while they solidify relations among neighborhood watch groups, the local police, and the Iraqi Army units. This is a police war, not a battle between squads, platoons, or battalions. In the summer heat, though, our soldiers face a daunting mission. Realistically, continuing with the surge into early 2008 would be prudent.

February, however, is the key presidential primary month. Most Republican candidates will not run on continuing the status quo; the surge will recede and be replaced by a "Plan B"—the gradual withdrawal of U.S. combat forces and an increase in advisers. General Petraeus must count on scoring a hat trick with his report in September. He must persuade a skeptical public that terrorism, not sectarian hatred, is the root cause of the simmering civil war; affirm that Iraqi forces can gradually defeat those terrorists; and assure, without divulging any timetables, that most U.S. combat forces will be quietly withdrawn over the next few years. Anbar swung from al-Qaeda's to the Coalition's orbit faster than anyone had projected. At issue is whether a similar change is germinating in Baghdad neighborhoods, where American and Iraqi forces are patrolling every one of the 67 police precincts. This is the key question General Petraeus will address in September.

Judgments about the surge being rendered in advance, no matter how well-meaning, lack the professional expertise and depth of analysis that Petraeus and his experienced staff possess. He is our military leader, and politicians and the public alike would do well to listen to him before reaching conclusions.

On balance, no one knows, as Colin Powell has put it, how much "bigger the problem is"—that is, how deep terrorism has planted the roots of sectarian hatred. The present incidents, no matter how horrifying, do not constitute a trend, and can be interpreted in as many ways as there are commentators. Hence the two rival narratives employed in describing Iraq's and our woes: whether the root cause of the violence is terrorism that can be contained, or sectarian hatred that cannot. **NR**

■ CAPITOL HILL

Opie? We'll Take Him!

Rep. Adam Putnam (R., Fla.) is on the rise

JOHN J. MILLER

Shortly after his first swearing-in ceremony as a congressman from Florida, Adam Putnam tried to climb the steps of the Capitol. A policeman grabbed him by the shoulder. "Where did you get that pin?" he asked, referring to the small lapel button that members of Congress wear so that, for example, cops don't stop them from climbing the steps of the Capitol. "I worked very hard for that pin," replied Putnam, who was just 26 years old at the time—and looked it.

Today, Putnam is about to turn 33. He's no longer the youngest member of Congress—he's now the second-youngest—and most Capitol police officers recognize him instantly. But many other Washingtonians continue to think he's someone's legislative assistant or deputy press secretary. Just before a meeting with President Bush at the White House on June 26, a Secret Service agent blocked Putnam's way into the Cabinet Room and asked, "Who are you staffing for?"

Yet it may not be long before everybody knows Putnam. As head of the House Republican Conference, he's technically No. 3 in the House GOP's pecking order, behind minority leader John Boehner and whip Roy Blunt. No one knows for certain what lies in Putnam's future: Some say he'll eventually run for governor of Florida, while others think he'll continue to chart a course in the House, where he has risen so rapidly. About the only thing they agree on is that Putnam is an intelligent and ambitious conservative whose climb bears watching.

He comes from a family that has grown citrus and raised cattle in Polk County for five generations, and he speaks with the southern twang that's still common in the rural parts of his state. Visitors to his congressional office aren't offered water or coffee but rather ten-ounce bottles of Florida's Natural orange juice. Despite an interest in agriculture, Putnam realized early on that he probably wouldn't run the family business. "My older brother has the gift of being able to look at a leaf and know what a plant needs," he says. "I don't have that, and on a family farm it's easy to end up with too many chiefs and not enough Indians."

If he wanted to avoid that sort of environment, he might have chosen a career path that led to somewhere other than Congress and its multitude of chiefdoms. Yet he has managed to flourish, earning admiration from Republicans and gripes from Democrats. "He's full of energy and brings a fresh perspective to the table," says a top GOP leadership aide.

As if Putnam's youthful appearance weren't distinctive enough, he's also the only redhead in Congress—a striking combination that led at least one Democrat into a conniption fit on the House floor in 2005, when Rep. Marion Berry of Arkansas couldn't resist calling Putnam a "Howdy Doody–looking nimrod." The insult came during a budget battle. Putnam and other conservatives were trying to slow the growth of entitlements; liberals were forecasting the mass starvation of women and children. "I am absolutely amazed at you boys over there," sputtered Berry. "You can be cute, you can be smart, and you may even pull this off, son. But I tell you one thing: You are young enough that you are going to have to live with it." Their proposal succeeded: a reduction of nearly $40 billon in mandatory spending on Medicare, Medicaid, and student loans. "In historical terms, it was a small amount—but nobody had done anything like it in almost ten years," says Brian Riedl of the Heritage Foundation.

Berry's ad hominem assault wasn't the first time a political foe had tried to lampoon Putnam's age and looks. After graduating from the University of Florida, Putnam pursued a seat in the state legislature when he was 22. His 69-year-old opponent ran an ad that featured one of Putnam's high-school-yearbook photos and warned voters not to let Putnam move "from the frat house to the State House." Putnam prevailed, served two terms in Tallahassee, and then set his eyes on

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Ambassador Akbar Ahmed, Ph.D., Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington DC, is "the world's leading authority on contemporary Islam," according to the BBC. He served as High Commissioner of Pakistan to Great Britain, and his numerous books, films and documentaries have won many awards.

Dr. Ahmed is regularly interviewed on CNN, CBC and the BBC and has appeared several times on the Oprah Winfrey show and Night Line. His most recent book, *Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization*, is the result of extensive travels and interviews conducted by Dr. Ahmed and a young American team throughout the Muslim world.

In 2004, he was given the Professor of the Year Award for Washington DC by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

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Washington. A writer for the *Tampa Tribune* quipped that "Adam Putnam is 26 and looks as if he's going on 13." That was the story's first sentence. Its headline: "Opie runs for Congress."

Opie was a character played by boy-actor Ron Howard on *The Andy Griffith Show*. If the comparison irritates Putnam, he doesn't let on. "It's actually been kind of an advantage," he says. "Every freshman wants to stand out in a body of 435. The fact that I looked like Opie helped me build relationships with senior members." It also forced him to put pressure on himself. "I have the attitude that I need to be better prepared than everybody else," he says. "If another member sends a letter to constituents and there's a misspelled word, people assume that his staff doesn't know how to spell. But if one of my letters contains a misspelling, they'll think that I'm the one who can't spell."

Putnam certainly is studious. In high school, he read *The Discoverers*, a work of popular history by Daniel J. Boorstin, the onetime Librarian of Congress. "After that, I tried to read everything I could find by him," he says. This quest soon led Putnam to *The Americans*, Boorstin's award-winning trilogy. "The way he described our country's diversity of faith, its pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit, its emphasis on self-reliance—that really rang true for me," says Putnam. "The vision of an ownership society and everything I believe in can be folded into that narrative." Following his first election to Congress, he contacted Boorstin, who lived in Washington until his death in 2004, and arranged to have lunch with the historian and his wife. "He signed my ratty copy of *The Discoverers*," says Putnam, as if he were talking about a prized autograph in a baseball-card collection.

It was hardly the only highlight of Putnam's first year as a congressman: On 9/11, he was with President Bush in Florida and flew on Air Force One as the nation came to grips with Osama bin Laden's terrorism. A couple of months later, he was caught in the middle of a dispute over free trade, when he expressed doubts over Trade Promotion Authority, which enhances the president's negotiating powers. Putnam held out, secured promises for Florida's citrus industry, and helped TPA achieve its narrow passage. Since then, he has voted for every free-trade agreement that's come before him. Today, he says he supports an extension of TPA, which expired at the end of June: "I'm a free-trader." More recently, Putnam has clashed with the White House over Alberto Gonzales: In April, he called for the attorney general's resignation, the highest-ranking House GOP leader to have done so. Despite these differences, his voting record is solidly conservative—the American Conservative Union gives him a lifetime rating of 92 percent.

Putnam's ascent into the leadership began in earnest last year, after Tom DeLay's fall from grace. In the ensuing shuffle, Putnam won election as head of the House Republican Policy Committee, which helps develop legislation. When Republicans lost control of the House in November, Putnam moved up to conference chairman, where he is responsible for communications strategy. "As a party, we need to rebuild our credentials on fiscal discipline and remind voters that there are big differences between us and the Democrats on issues such as taxes." He certainly isn't shy about making his point. On June 28, Putnam spoke from the House floor on a Democratic spending bill. His remarks lasted about three minutes, and they included three references to "the largest tax increase in American history."

In an interview last winter, Putnam said that he had no immediate plans to endorse any of the GOP presidential candidates because he believed it was more important for them to court conservatives than for conservatives to court them. Even so, he privately leaned toward Mitt Romney. His views on the race changed when Fred Thompson became a potential candidate. On April 14, at a barbecue fundraiser in Dade City, Fla., Putnam asked his supporters for their opinions. "There were maybe 200 people inside a hot barn, and I decided on a whim to hold a straw poll," he says. "I listed the candidates. Rudy Giuliani received good applause. The responses for Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich were so-so. When I mentioned John McCain, everyone was silent. Then I said, 'What about Fred Thompson?' The place went wild."

It wasn't long before Putnam endorsed Thompson. "I feel good about supporting him because he's a committed conservative who can win the primary and the general elections," he says.

It remains to be seen whether the late-blooming Thompson can climb to the top of American politics. It's a safe bet, however, that the climb of Putnam, the early bloomer, has only just begun. **NR**

Congressman Putnam amidst the oranges

DARREN GYGI

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"One Land for Two Peoples"

Is it a solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict or a recipe for disaster?

For decades, the declared thrust of the Palestinians has been their desire of having their own state – in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and in the Gaza Strip. Now, a new idea has taken hold and is propagated in national media: a binational state, encompassing those territories and "Israel proper." The slogan is "One Land for Two Peoples."

What are the facts?

Review of history: The Arabs have launched four major wars against Israel, at the end of which Israel remained in possession of all the lands west of the Jordan River, the undivided city of Jerusalem, the vast Sinai, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip. In what was in all likelihood a major act of folly, but in order to attain peace with Egypt, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt. But the peace with Egypt is the coldest imaginable.

Thus, having been unable to defeat Israel in war and unable to wear it down by their "intifadas," the Arabs had to think up something new in order to destroy Israel. And they did indeed come up with something. According to the late and unlamented Yasser Arafat, the most important weapon of the Arabs is the "Arab womb," the motto being: "If we can't defeat them in war, let's outbreed them." And that is exactly what would happen if there ever were a "binational" state. There can be little doubt that, within a generation or less, the Arabs would have outbred their Jewish fellow citizens and would have become the majority in the country. They would thus have accomplished what they were unable to attain by any other means, namely the destruction of the Jewish state.

> "The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance…"

Artificial countries: With the exception of Egypt, all the countries of the Middle East are artificial creations. After World War I, England and France carved up the Ottoman Empire, with England retaining what are now Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Iraq, and France being in possession of what are now Syria and Lebanon.

In 1917, the Balfour Declaration, proclaimed by the British mandatory power, established all of Palestine – east and west of the Jordan River – as the reconstituted homeland for the Jewish people. This was ratified by the 52 countries of the League of Nations. Insistence that these are Arab lands and that the Jews are "occupiers" is a notion that is farily new. But it has been repeated so often and for so long that most of the world has come to believe it. But it has no basis in fact at all. It is a myth.

If Israel were ever to consent to the creation of a binational state, how would it work out? To get the answer, one only needs to go next door to Lebanon. In order to provide a safe haven for the Maronite Christians, the French carved out the artificial state of Lebanon. Within just one generation, the population ratio had begun to change in favor of the Muslims. Strife broke out, which ultimately culminated in a bloody civil war that lasted for close to ten years and in which scores of thousands died. Can anybody really believe that, given the mortal hatred of the Muslims against the Jews, things would be any different in Israel/Palestine? Of course not! A bloody civil war would be the inevitable result.

Created as a Jewish state: Israel was created as a Jewish state by the will of the nations of the world and by the brain and brawn of the Jewish people. There is no reason why the Israelis would turn their country over to those who are their declared mortal enemies. Do the Turks plan to establish a binational state with the Kurds (or do the Iranians or Iraqis, for that matter)? Do the Spaniards consider a binational state with the Basques? Do the Chinese propose the formation of a binational state with the Tibetans? Of course not. Why, therefore, should Israel even consider sharing its country with those whose never-changing agenda is its destruction? Why should Israel, one of the most advanced countries in the world in virtually every field of endeavor, make itself hostage to those who live in backwardness and ignorance and who are guided by religious fanaticism? Israel was founded to be the Jewish homeland and it will never acquiesce to its own destruction by allowing itself to become a binational state.

A binational state is a non-starter and, realistically, a Palestinian state in any portion of Judea/Samaria and Gaza (even in the unlikely case that the Israelis were ever willing to concede it) would not be viable. What then is the possible solution to this enduring problem? The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance (something that the Kurds would give anything to attain). If they were unhappy with that solution they would be at liberty to migrate to any of the over twenty Arab countries that, one would hope, would welcome them with open arms.

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An Unfair Doctrine

Democrats try once again to 'hush Rush,' and many others

BYRON YORK

RUSH LIMBAUGH remembers the days when the Fairness Doctrine ruled the world of radio. There was a moment in 1972, he recalls, when as a young disc jockey at WIXZ, an AM station in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, he criticized coverage of the Democratic response to Richard Nixon's State of the Union address. The State of the Union is a constitutionally mandated report, Limbaugh told listeners, but there's nothing in the Constitution about any opposition-party response. So why were the networks covering it as if it were equal to the president's speech?

It was a reasonable question, something one might hear on dozens of programs today. But it wasn't something you could say on the air in 1972. "I got a scathing phone call on the hotline during the commercial break," Limbaugh recalls, referring to the direct phone line from station management to the broadcast studio. "And then I got a follow-up memo. They said these types of things, if they are on this radio station, will appear in editorials, written and recorded by management." The station's executives, worried about running afoul of the Fairness Doctrine, laid down the law: Mere on-air personalities weren't supposed to discuss issues of importance. "I had to button my lip about it," Limbaugh says.

Ask any radio veteran—not just the nation's most successful talk-show host—and he'll probably have a similar story about the bad old days of the Fairness Doctrine. From the earliest years of radio until 1987, when the Doctrine was repealed, the federal government rode herd on what broadcasters could and could not say about controversial issues. If a radio host took a strong position on the air, he might find himself under investigation by officials of the Federal Communications Commission, who would carefully examine his words to determine whether they passed government standards of fairness. If they didn't, the government might require his station to offer free air time to people with other views, or it might punish the owners in a number of ways, including the revocation of their license to be on the air. The whole process was a blatant violation of First Amendment rights—what journalist or commentator today would stand for it?—but it was the way things worked in broadcasting for more than 50 years.

And now it might be coming back. After the Doctrine was repealed, there was an explosion of talk and information on the radio, and today the business is dominated by Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Laura Ingraham, Bill Bennett, and a long list of other conservatives. Their commercial success, along with the failure of a number of liberal talk-radio ventures, has led some influential people in Washington to argue that the Fairness Doctrine should be revived.

"I have this old-fashioned attitude that when Americans hear both sides of the story, they're in a better position to make a decision," Illinois Democrat Richard Durbin, the number-two-ranking leader in the Senate, said recently. "It's time to reinstitute the Fairness Doctrine." John Kerry agreed, saying the Fairness Doctrine "ought to be there." And Dianne Feinstein, chairman of the powerful Senate Rules Committee, said she is "looking" at reinstatement. "I think there ought to be an opportunity to present the other side," she said. "Unfortunately, talk radio is overwhelmingly one-way."

Their statements raised a lot of red flags, not just among conservatives but throughout the radio industry. Durbin, Feinstein, and Kerry have significant clout in the Senate. Given their views,

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what if a Democrat wins control of the White House in 2008, and the party keeps control of the House and Senate? Might we see a serious attempt to revive the Doctrine? If so, what would that mean? The best way to understand what could happen if the Fairness Doctrine were to return is to look back at how it worked in the years before 1987. It's not a pretty sight.

STOPWATCHES AND TAPE RECORDERS

In the mid-1920s, when radio was new, stations were free to broadcast on any frequency they liked. But it didn't take long for them to start bumping into each other, filling the radio dial with interfering signals. The situation was approaching chaos when Congress stepped in with the Radio Act of 1927. The Act set up the Federal Radio Commission, which divided the radio spectrum and issued licenses to stations to broadcast on particular frequencies. The system was refined in the Communications Act of 1934, which broadened the radio commission's powers and renamed it the Federal Communications Commission.

At the time of both bills' passage, Congress debated whether the new laws should contain a fairness provision requiring broadcasters to present differing views on important issues. Lawmakers rejected the idea both times. Nevertheless, the new FCC, on its own, adopted a fairness principle. The reasoning was that the radio airwaves were a scarce public commodity and there were few radio stations, so broadcasters had an obligation to stay away from one-sided discussions of public affairs.

In practice, however, the FCC's position evolved into a ban on editorializing, with the commission encouraging broadcasters to avoid hot political issues. But just 15 years later, in 1949, the FCC did an about-face, issuing its landmark "Report on Editorializing by Broadcast Licensees," which *required* broadcasters to discuss public affairs. License holders, the FCC declared, must devote "a reasonable percentage of their broadcast time" to news and the "discussion of public issues of interest in the community served by the particular station." Furthermore, the commission said broadcasters must present "the different attitudes and viewpoints concerning these vital and often controversial issues which are held by the various groups which make up the community."

The edict became known as the Fairness Doctrine, and after 1949 the FCC established enforcement procedures under which members of the listening public, if they felt a broadcaster had covered a public issue in an unbalanced way, could complain to the commission. FCC staff would then investigate the complaint, and, acting as judge and jury, might order the broadcaster to give airtime to the complainant. The FCC also had the authority to take more severe measures, including revoking the broadcaster's license, thereby putting him out of business.

Once in operation, Fairness Doctrine enforcement became a system for the government to micromanage editorial content. "When a complaint came in, the staff would start trying to determine a couple of things," says Jim McKinney, a former head of the FCC's Mass Media Bureau who began work at the commission in the early 1960s. "One, was the issue of public importance in the local community, and two, if it was, how was it treated not only by the broadcaster, but by other forms of mass communication in the community? That required them to get local newspapers and listen to tape recordings that a complainant sent in, and ask the broadcaster to provide any other material they had done on the same topic."

With evidence in hand, the FCC staff would "pull out stopwatches," McKinney continues. "They would get out the tapes, and they would start timing how many minutes and seconds a broadcaster had devoted to the issue of public importance. And then, depending on how that came out, they would either close the investigation, or they would prepare an item for the commission to take an enforcement action."

The system seemed unconstitutional on its face, as well as grossly unfair to broadcasters; certainly no newspaper would tolerate the government's telling it what to cover and what to say. The FCC repeatedly cited the scarcity argument to justify its actions, but in the years after 1949 a significant number of broadcasters rejected its reasoning, and enforcement of the Doctrine became an intensely contentious and political affair. The FCC found itself playing the role of referee in a series of skirmishes over political talk on the airwaves, and by the mid-1960s the issue was fought out in a lawsuit that went all the way to the Supreme Court.

The story began in November 1964, just a few weeks after Lyndon Johnson trounced Barry Goldwater. WGCB, a small radio station in Red Lion, Pa., ran a commentary by a conservative preacher named Billy James Hargis in which Hargis denounced a recently published book entitled *Goldwater: Extremist on the Right*. Among those listening to Hargis's commentary were radio monitors on the Democratic National Committee's payroll. The DNC had been working with the Kennedy administration in a campaign to use the Fairness Doctrine to, in the words of one administration official, "challenge and harass right-wing broadcasters in the hope that the challenges would be so costly to them that they would be inhibited and decide it was too expensive to continue."

The DNC enlisted the author of *Goldwater: Extremist on the Right*, a man named Fred Cook, to file a Fairness Doctrine complaint against WGCB, demanding equal time to respond. (For Cook, it was part of a personal crusade; he had recently written an article about conservative broadcasters, "Radio Right: Hate Clubs of the Air," for *The Nation*.) The FCC sided with Cook, ordering WGCB to give him time to respond. The station refused, although it offered to sell time to Cook at the same rate, $7.50 for 15 minutes, that Hargis had paid. The case went to court and eventually resulted in the Supreme Court ruling *Red Lion Broadcasting Co.* v. *Federal Communications Commission*, in which the Court ruled unanimously in favor of the FCC. The Fairness Doctrine was the law of the land in broadcasting.

CHILLING EFFECT

After *Red Lion*, FCC officials had new authority to get out the stopwatches, and local broadcasters were forced to hire lawyers, gather evidence, and try to defend their editorial decisions. What few people realized at first, however, was that *Red Lion* had within it the seeds of its own destruction.

Even though the FCC won the case, it did not win the Court's unequivocal approval of the Fairness Doctrine. In a key passage, the justices noted that the intention of the Doctrine was to bring more opinions to the public airwaves. If that did not happen, they wrote—if the Doctrine instead had "the net effect of reducing

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rather than enhancing the volume and quality of coverage"—then the Doctrine might warrant reconsideration.

And that is just what happened. In the 1970s, as *Red Lion* took hold among broadcasters, their reaction was not to present more viewpoints on controversial issues but to try to present no viewpoints at all. The last thing station owners wanted was a challenge to their license, so they often ordered their on-air talent—Rush Limbaugh's experience was just one small example—to talk only about topics that wouldn't get anyone riled up. "As a result," says Michael Harrison, editor of *Talkers*, the radio-industry magazine, "there was very little provocative, edgy, informative, controversial, or even pertinent political speech on the radio."

Radio executives began to talk about the "chilling effect" of the Doctrine, and repealing it became their top priority. (Remember, the Doctrine had never been a law approved by Congress, so even though it had passed muster with the Supreme Court, the FCC had the power simply to do away with it.) But nothing much changed until 1981, when the Reagan administration took office. The new administration installed communications lawyer Mark Fowler as FCC chairman, and with that the commission was led by a First Amendment believer who was convinced the Doctrine had to go.

For one thing, Fowler believed the growth of cable and satellite TV, as well as a big increase in the number of radio stations, had made the scarcity argument obsolete. More important, he believed the Doctrine was unconstitutional on its face, regardless of scarcity. "The First Amendment says Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of the press, and no law means no law," Fowler says. "The First Amendment was like an old antique that had been slathered over with layer after layer of paint."

But Fowler, and later Dennis Patrick, Reagan's next appointee as chairman, couldn't just throw a ruling with Supreme Court approval and years of practice out the window. Instead, they began the laborious project of interviewing broadcasters and gathering information about how the Doctrine worked in the real world. "What we found," recalls Patrick, "were broadcasters who said that, rather than get into litigious waters, rather than incur expenses and risk losing their licenses, they chose to stay away from controversial issues." In 1985, the FCC released an extensive report filled with examples of the chilling effect.

There was the radio-station manager in southern California who canceled a series of reports on religious cults because of "an assessment of the legal and personnel costs associated with defending a possible Fairness Doctrine complaint." There was the Cornhusker Television Corporation executive in Nebraska who said he didn't run a number of public-affairs programs for fear of having to defend against Doctrine complaints. And there was the testimony of one Dan Rather, who recounted his experience at a large-market radio station in Texas. "Not only the station manager but the newspeople as well were very much aware of this government presence looking over their shoulders," Rather told the commission.

Armed with the evidence, the FCC had the strong support of broadcasters. But liberal activists who had relied on the Doctrine in the past opposed the move. And so did some conservatives. Among them were Phyllis Schlafly and the late Reed Irvine, founder of Accuracy in Media, who argued that repeal would make liberal bias in the media worse. "Many [broadcasters] have done no more than pay lip service to fairness even when it was required by law," Irvine wrote in a letter to the *New York Times* in 1987. "It is foolish to think that they would suddenly become addicted to fairness if all legal restraints on their uninhibited exercise of power were removed."

"At the time, we didn't have the alternative media that we have now, and they felt it was the only chance they had to get on the air with their point of view," recalls Paul Weyrich, who favored repeal, in part because he had once worked in radio and had a first-hand sense of the burdens imposed by the Doctrine. "They couldn't see talk radio coming as it is today, and of course the Internet was unknown."

In 1987 the Fairness Doctrine was thrown out. After a court challenge upheld the FCC's decision, broadcasters were finally free to speak freely. Talk radio exploded and conservative dominance was born. And so was a movement to bring government control back to radio.

The repealers won, and in 1987 the Doctrine was thrown out. After a court challenge upheld the FCC's decision, broadcasters were finally free to speak freely. Talk radio exploded and conservative dominance was born. And so was a movement to bring government control back to radio.

THE NEW REGULATORS

For nearly two decades, liberal activists have tried to counter the success of Limbaugh and the conservative hosts who followed him. First they tried to restore the Doctrine, beginning in 1993 with a bill dubbed "Hush Rush." That effort died after Republican victories in 1994, so liberals turned to the marketplace, searching for a Rush of their own. For a while, they hoped that Jim Hightower, a former Texas state official with a small on-air following, might be the answer. When Hightower failed, they hoped that Mario Cuomo, the former New York governor, might fit the bill. When Cuomo failed, they came up with the idea of a liberal network, Air America, that would succeed where single hosts had not. But Air America ended up in bankruptcy, although it has recently undergone restructuring and is still at least nominally in business.

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Now they're back to the Fairness Doctrine. In October 2004, Media Matters for America, the liberal watchdog group funded by a number of the same donors who made spectacularly large contributions to Democratic 527 groups in the last few elections, announced a campaign to support New York Democratic representative Louise Slaughter's bill to re-impose the Doctrine. "Tired of imbalanced political discourse on our airwaves?" Media Matters asked readers in a petition appeal. "By restoring a diversity of fact and opinion to programming, Fairness Doctrine legislation restores a concept [of balance] that has been lost since the 1980s." The crusade was picked up by a number of "netroots" activists, and now Durbin, Feinstein, and Kerry are on board.

That last development "set off alarm bells," says Indiana Republican representative Mike Pence. Pence, a former radio-talk-show host himself, was so concerned that in late June he and a colleague, Arizona Republican Jeff Flake, came up with the idea of attaching to an FCC-funding bill an amendment that barred the commission from using its funds to reinstate the Doctrine. The amendment passed the House, 309 to 115.

But it was just a one-year fix. Pence is also sponsoring the Broadcaster Freedom Act, which would permanently take away from the FCC the authority to re-impose the Fairness Doctrine. If it passes, the only way the Doctrine could come back would be by an act of Congress. "The American people need to know that a future Democrat president could appoint members to the FCC and issue executive orders that in combination could bring back the Fairness Doctrine without a single act of Congress," Pence says. "Our bill, very simply put, deprives the FCC of that authority."

Even if Pence succeeds, there is still another threat on the horizon. The debate over radio fairness now includes a new player, the liberal think tank Center for American Progress, which in June issued a report, "The Structural Imbalance of Political Talk Radio," advocating not a return to the Fairness Doctrine but an overhaul of the radio-station ownership structure in the United States. "The gap between conservative and progressive talk radio is the result of multiple structural problems in the U.S. regulatory system," the report states, explaining that stations owned by big companies, such as Clear Channel and Salem Broadcasting, are more likely to carry conservative talk than stations owned by smaller companies. To remedy that "problem," the Center advocates policies to reduce the number of stations that one company can own. It also recommends a de facto quota system to ensure that more women and minorities own stations. And it would penalize those radio-station owners who do not get in line by requiring them "to pay a fee to support public broadcasting."

It's not clear whether the Center's proposals will win much support in Congress. But it is safe to say that in the next few years there will be repeated attempts to reintroduce some sort of regulation to control the content of talk radio. Those proposals will certainly have some political support on the left. But among those who know radio best, there's great optimism that freedom of speech will win, not only in a court of law but in the court of public opinion. "I don't think this has a prayer," says Rush Limbaugh. "When I started there were 125 talk stations. Today there are 2,000. The idea that there are fewer ideas expressed, that there is less diversity, is absurd." **NR**

■ **WASHINGTON**

Gerson's World

The president's chief speechwriter turns columnist

RAMESH PONNURU

If Karl Rove is "Bush's brain," as he was dubbed years ago, Michael Gerson is Bush's soul. Bush's brain may tell him that he needs to sign a bloated farm bill in the run-up to an election, or give in to congressional Republicans' demands that Medicare reform be watered down. His soul has loftier ambitions. As Bush's chief speechwriter during his presidential campaign and most of his administration, Gerson had the job of expressing those ambitions.

No one doubts that he did his job exceptionally well. Nor does anyone doubt that the speechwriting team Gerson headed had more prominence in the administration than most of its predecessors. Bush's spokesmen and press conferences have not done much of the work of defending his most important policies or defining his central themes. His prepared speeches took on that task, and Gerson, more than anyone else, wrote them.

Since he left the White House in 2006, Gerson has written a column, first for *Newsweek* and now for the *Washington Post*. He has not been a voice for Bush, if by voice you mean "shill." He is, most of the time, no propagandist. His column reflects a breadth of interests—he has written about AIDS in Africa, the evolution of evangelicalism, mosque-state relations in Turkey, and online role-playing games—that go far beyond the Beltway preoccupations of the moment. (No columns have dealt with the Scooter Libby case.)

Gerson has, however, been a voice for Bushism. His column reveals some of the moral and intellectual impulses that have animated this presidency. There is a lot that is admirable about those impulses, and you don't have to search too far to see it: Bushism admires itself. Gerson's columns also help explain why this administration has gone so sour.

"My low point with the Republican party came in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina," Gerson wrote in December 2006. "[T]he response of many Republicans was to use the disaster as an excuse for cutting government spending, particularly the Medicare prescription-drug benefit for seniors." That's one way of putting it. In their own minds, what "many Republicans" were trying to do was cut some government spending in favor of other government spending. The notion was that the federal government, when it encountered a critical need, should prioritize its spending rather than raise its total. Gerson's comment indicates not only his disagreement with but also his lack of sympathy for traditional conservatism.

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Gerson followed the administration line on its spending. He noted that discretionary spending unrelated to national security has merely "increased at 3.9 percent a year on average." But "discretionary spending" is a term of art, and most of the budget—the expensive prescription-drug benefit about which Gerson was so solicitous, for example—falls outside it. Besides, if national-security spending had to rise after September 11, shouldn't domestic discretionary spending have been cut to make room for it?

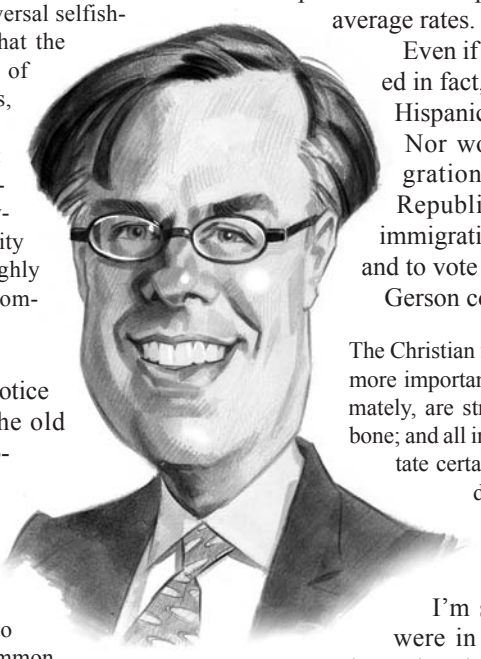
The conservatives who complained about Bush's spending were not conservatives at all, Gerson maintained, but libertarians:

> The old conservatives had some concerns about that creed, which Russell Kirk called "an ideology of universal selfishness." Conservatives have generally taught that the health of society is determined by the health of institutions: families, neighborhoods, schools, congregations. Unfettered individualism can loosen those bonds, while government can act to strengthen them. By this standard, good public policies—from incentives to charitable giving, to imposing minimal standards on inner-city schools—are not apostasy; they are a thoroughly orthodox, conservative commitment to the common good.

Each sentence is true in itself, so you hardly notice that by the end of the passage Kirk and "the old conservatives" have somehow become proponents of an expanded welfare state.

To campaign against big government in 2008, Gerson explained, would be both a moral and a political mistake.

> What does antigovernment conservatism offer to inner-city neighborhoods where violence is common and families are rare? Nothing. What achievement would it contribute to racial healing and the unity of our country? No achievement at all. Anti-government conservatism turns out to be a strange kind of idealism—an idealism that strangles mercy.



Michael Gerson

Who does Gerson think came up with school choice? Some of us think that tuition tax credits would do rather more for inner-city kids than the No Child Left Behind Act and the faith-based initiative.

BAD DATA AND SENTIMENTALITY

Gerson's conservatism—Bush's too, really—has no friends to its right. Witness Gerson's treatment of immigration. In May, Gerson lamented that "anti-immigrant sentiments are very much alive." Most of his column was devoted to showing that such anti-immigrant sentiments are a political dead end for Republicans. To support this thesis Gerson invoked bad data and sentimentality. He claimed that it was crucial for Republicans to get more than 40 percent of the Hispanic vote, and that Bush had shown it could be done in 2004. Actually pollsters think he got less than that: somewhere between 33 and 40 percent of the vote, below Gerson's hurdle. Gerson also said that Hispanics are "natural entrepreneurs, with strong family values, who are focused on education and social mobility," and therefore ripe for Republican plucking. Hispanics, it turns out, are better than the rest of us: They go to church more, and have lower divorce rates.

It is not necessary to dislike or look down on Hispanics to observe that the statistics belie this depiction of them as plaster saints. Immigrants from Mexico and Central America have much lower than average rates of self-employment. Cubans are the only Hispanic group with a higher than average rate. Hispanics' "strong family values," meanwhile, seem to be compatible with an illegitimacy rate that is significantly higher than that for non-Hispanic whites. Their focus on education does not keep them from dropping out of high school at higher than average rates.

Even if Gerson's assertions were better grounded in fact, however, they would hardly prove that Hispanics are natural conservatives in politics. Nor would they prove that expanded immigration is the best way to make them into Republican voters. It might be that a reduced immigration flow would cause them to assimilate, and to vote Republican, faster.

Gerson concludes,

> The Christian faith teaches that our common humanity is more important than our nationality. That all of us, ultimately, are strangers in this world and brothers to the bone; and all in need of amnesty. This belief does not dictate certain policies in a piece of legislation, but it does forbid rage and national chauvinism. And this is worth a reminder as well.

All of us may be in need of amnesty, but I'm sure that after reading that some of us were in more pressing need of an airsickness bag. The Christian faith does not, as a matter of fact, teach that our common humanity is more important than our nationality when it comes to making policy on citizenship. One cannot help suspecting a little, well, bad faith in Gerson's concession that he does not mean to suggest that his little sermon dictates any particular government policy. Of course that is what he is suggesting. The whole column is designed to show that opposition to the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 is wrongheaded, and this religious note is how he has chosen to end that column.

Gerson came back to immigration a few weeks later, at the end of a column praising John McCain:

> After recounting the arguments for reform, he mentioned Maria Hernandez Perez, nearly 2, with "thick brown hair and eyes the color of chocolate," and Kelia Velazquez-Gonzalez, 16, who "carried a Bible in her backpack." Both died terrible deaths in the Arizona desert.
>
> For McCain, they were not "illegals," they were human beings, with names. "We can't let immigrants break our laws with impunity," he said. "But these people are also God's children who wanted simply to be Americans."
>
> This is not moral exhibitionism; it is just morality.

DARREN GYGI

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To recognize our common humanity with illegal immigrants is indeed a moral imperative. To imply that one's opponents in a political debate do not recognize it is, exactly, moral exhibitionism. One way to prevent these heartbreaking desert scenes, after all, is to build a high wall along the length of our southern border.

GOODBYE, HAYEK?

In between the column on immigration and the one on McCain, Gerson wrote about how both parties had abandoned the center. The Democrats had abandoned Clintonism on trade and national security. As for the Republicans:

> President Bush ran and won in 2000 as "a different kind of Republican"—meaning the kind that isn't libertarian or nativist. Bush was orthodox on tax cuts and moral values. But from the earliest days of the nomination contest, he set out policies—a federal role in improving education, humane immigration reform, Medicare prescription drug coverage—that borrowed more from Roman Catholic social thought than from Friedrich Hayek. . . .

> Today, in both parties, fundamentalism is again the fashion. . . . Talk-radio conservatism assaults the most obviously Catholic elements of Bushism—a role for government in compassion and a welcoming attitude toward immigrants. "Purity" is defined as the empathy of Tom DeLay and the racial sensitivity of Tom Tancredo.

Gerson is engaged in a slight bit of revisionism. Bush made a big point of being less hostile to federal activism than other Republicans—read: Newt Gingrich—but did not play up his support for immigration nearly as much. And while many things have been said against Catholic social thought over the years, it can hardly be blamed for the massive expansion of a bankrupt entitlement. (Any more than Russell Kirk can.)

All that said, it is true that Catholic voters have tended to look more positively on federal activism than Protestants. Backing away from Gingrichite anti-statism helped Bush to win in 2000 and 2004, in part because it increased the Republican share of the Catholic vote. The standard conservative critique of Bush assumes that he could have won in 2000 without promising a prescription-drug plan and won again in 2004 without delivering on that promise. Gerson is right to question the political realism of that critique. He is right as well to say that voters will not reward a party that "elevates abstract antigovernment ideology above human needs." No successful Republican presidential candidate has won purely on a platform of shrinking the government (although Ronald Reagan succeeded in part by explaining how "abstract antigovernment ideology" met "human needs"). It is a point that free-market idealists probably need to hear.

By restoring the perception that federal activism helped people who "work hard and play by the rules"—and above all, by signing welfare reform—President Clinton revived the political majority for such activism. The Bush administration began with the public more eager to see government benefits expanded than to see taxes cut. Conservatives cannot wish these circumstances away.

But there are several possible responses to those circumstances, two of which have played out in this administration. One response, associated most with Rove, is to dole out those benefits necessary to win elections while also looking for what he calls "game changers": policies that change the political landscape and make bolder free-market reform possible. Cutting farm benefits doesn't change the game; enacting health savings accounts does. Or so goes the theory.

Another response, however, is to make a virtue of big government and devise putatively conservative justifications for it. The Gersonian tendency is to create a Christian social democracy in this country. Libertarian critics of that tendency go too far when they call it theocratic. But it is not in keeping with the distinctive genius of America, or of American conservatism.

> In Gerson's columns, what is most important for the country to do is stand for the right moral position; actually accomplishing something is secondary.

The administration has pursued both visions at once—they rarely conflict on a day-to-day basis—with its special brand of incompetence. To build a socially conservative, statist majority, Republicans would have had to be trusted to get the job done; they aren't. To change the game, if it was ever possible, would have taken more political creativity than Bush's generally second-rate domestic-policy staff possessed.

If speechwriting took on an outsized importance in this White House, it was also, in a way, less influential than ever. Bush never really took control of his own administration: Witness the policy wars between the State and Defense Departments in the middle of a real war, or the battles between the CIA and the vice president's office. Speeches were made announcing new policies that were never quite implemented. The president's words did not matter. Perhaps that even made a kind of sense. In Gerson's columns, what is most important for the country to do is stand for the right moral position; actually accomplishing something is secondary. That would require empiricism, which is nearly absent from those columns. Hispanics are natural entrepreneurs, just as Iraqis are natural democrats. To think otherwise would be wrong.

In his column on the forsaken center, Gerson paused only briefly to ponder why Republicans are abandoning his philosophy. If you have no friends to the right, there might come a day when you need friends on the right and can't find any. **NR**

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■ CUBA

The Myth of Cuban Health Care

Michael Moore gives it a powerful boost

JAY NORDLINGER

MICHAEL MOORE has made another piece of pure propaganda. This film, called *Sicko*, attacks the American health-care system. You will agree that there is a lot to attack. But Moore glorifies socialist systems, which have problems all their own. And perhaps his worst offense is to glorify Fidel Castro's system, as has been done endlessly for as long as most people can remember.

Moore hit on an inspired idea: He took a group of sick Americans to Cuba, to seek health care. Not only are these unfortunate people Americans: They are 9/11 rescue workers, heroes. They have been denied the care they need in America (or so the film alleges), and must get it elsewhere.

As the group is heading to Havana, we hear a song: "I'm on my way to Cuba . . . where all is happy; Cuba, where all is gay." And it appears exactly this way in Moore's film. You may remember that, in his previous film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Saddam Hussein's Iraq was portrayed as a nation of happy kite-fliers. The same artistry is applied to *Sicko*.

The Left has always had a deep psychological need to believe in the myth of Cuban health care. On that island, as everywhere else, Communism has turned out to be a disaster: economic, physical, and moral. Not only have persecution, torture, and murder been routine, there is nothing material to show for it. The Leninist rationalization was, "You have to break some eggs to make an omelet." Orwell memorably replied, "Where's the omelet?" There is never an omelet.

But Castro's apologists have tried to create one. Their hopes rest on three lies, principally: that Castro cares for the sick; that he is responsible for almost universal literacy; and that he has been a boon to blacks. Castroite propaganda has been extraordinarily effective, reaching even to people who should know better. Among the most disgraceful words ever uttered by a secretary of state were uttered by Colin Powell in 2001, when he said, "He's done some good things for his people." The "he," of course, was Cuba's dictator.

It was hard to know which was worse: the "his people," which is certainly how Castro thinks of Cubans. Or the imagined omelet, the "good things."

The myth of Cuban health care has been debunked in article after article, for the last several decades. (Remember that Castro took power in 1959.) But Michael Moore has given the myth fresh legs, necessitating another round of such articles. If I had a nickel for every article I've read entitled "The Myth of Cuban Health Care" . . . But here is another one.

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

To be sure, there is excellent health care on Cuba—just not for ordinary Cubans. Dr. Jaime Suchlicki of the University of Miami's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies explains that there is not just one system, or even two: There are three. The first is for foreigners who come to Cuba specifically for medical care. This is known as "medical tourism." The tourists pay in hard currency, which provides oxygen to the regime. And the facilities in which they are treated are First World: clean, well supplied, state-of-the-art.

The foreigners-only facilities do a big business in what you might call vanity treatments: Botox, liposuction, and breast implants. Remember, too, that there are many separate, or segregated, facilities on Cuba. People speak of "tourism apartheid." For example, there are separate hotels, separate beaches, separate restaurants—separate everything. As you can well imagine, this causes widespread resentment in the general population.

The second health-care system is for Cuban elites—the Party, the military, official artists and writers, and so on. In the Soviet Union, these people were called the "nomenklatura." And their system, like the one for medical tourists, is top-notch.

Then there is the real Cuban system, the one that ordinary people must use—and it is wretched. Testimony and documentation on the subject are vast. Hospitals and clinics are crumbling. Conditions are so unsanitary, patients may be better off at home, whatever home is. If they do have to go to the hospital, they must bring their own bedsheets, soap, towels, food, *light bulbs*—even toilet paper. And basic medications are scarce. In *Sicko*, even sophisticated medications are plentiful and cheap. In the real Cuba, finding an aspirin can be a chore. And an antibiotic will fetch a fortune on the black market.

A nurse spoke to Isabel Vincent of Canada's *National Post*. "We have nothing," said the nurse. "I haven't seen aspirin in a Cuban store here for more than a year. If you have any pills in your purse, I'll take them. Even if they have passed their expiry date."

The equipment that doctors have to work with is either antiquated or nonexistent. Doctors have been known to reuse latex gloves—there is no choice. When they travel to the island, on errands of mercy, American doctors make sure to take as much equipment and as many supplies as they can carry. One told the Associated Press, "The [Cuban] doctors are pretty well trained, but they have nothing to work with. It's like operating with knives and spoons."

And doctors are not necessarily privileged citizens in Cuba. A doctor in exile told the *Miami Herald* that, in 2003, he earned what most doctors did: 575 pesos a month, or about 25 dollars. He had to sell pork out of his home to get by. And the chief of medical services for the whole of the Cuban military had to rent out his car as a taxi on weekends. "Everyone tries to survive," he explained. (Of course, you can call a Cuban with a car privileged, whatever he does with it.)

So deplorable is the state of health care in Cuba that old-fashioned diseases are back with a vengeance. These include tuberculosis, leprosy, and typhoid fever. And dengue, another fever, is a particular menace. Indeed, an exiled doctor named Dessy Mendoza Rivero—a former political prisoner and a spectacularly brave man—wrote a book called *¡Dengue! La Epidemia Secreta de Fidel Castro*.

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INFANT MORTALITY

When Castro seized power, almost 50 years ago, Cuba was one of the most advanced countries in Latin America. Its infant-mortality rate was the 13th-lowest in all the world, ahead of even France, Belgium, and West Germany. Statistics in Castro's Cuba are hard to come by, because honest statistics in any totalitarian society are hard to come by. Some kind of accounting is possible, however: Cuba has slipped in infant mortality, as it has in every other area (except repression). But its infant-mortality rate remains respectable.

You might suspect a story behind this respectability—and you are right. The regime is very keen on keeping infant mortality down, knowing that the world looks to this statistic as an indicator of the general health of a country. Cuban doctors are instructed to pay particular attention to prenatal and infant care. A woman's pregnancy is closely monitored. (The regime manages to make the necessary equipment available.) And if there is any sign of abnormality, any reason for concern—the pregnancy is "interrupted." That is the going euphemism for abortion. The abortion rate in Cuba is sky-high, perversely keeping the infant-mortality rate down.

Many doctors, of course, recoil at this state of affairs. And there is much doctor dissidence on the island. Some physicians have opened their own clinics, caring for the poor and desperate according to medical standards, not according to ideology or governmental dictates. The authorities have warned that, in the words of one report, "new dissidences in the public-health sector will not be tolerated." Anyone trying to work outside of approved channels is labeled a counterrevolutionary or enemy agent.

Castro will see you now.

ROMAN GENN

Furthermore, the shortage of doctors on the island is acute—which is strange, because there are abundant Cuban doctors. Where are they? They're abroad. In fact, a standard joke is that, in order to see a Cuban doctor, a Cuban must contrive to leave the island.

In his film, Michael Moore speaks of the "generosity" of Castro's health programs. What he means, in part, is that Castro has long sent doctors overseas on "humanitarian medical missions." These missions are an important part of the dictator's self-image, and of his image at large. Cuban doctors go to such "revolutionary" countries as Chávez's Venezuela, Morales's Bolivia, and Mugabe's Zimbabwe. The missions are lucrative for Castro, bringing him about $2.5 billion a year.

Yet they are somewhat risky for him, too. The Cubans abroad are vigilantly watched, and the regime seldom sends unmarried doctors: They want wives and families back home, as hostages. Still, the Cuban doctors defect, and do so by the hundreds. They make a run for it in every country in which they serve, in any way they can. For example, doctors in Venezuela flee into Colombia; others try a friendly embassy, or start yelling in some international airport, during a transfer. Many of the doctors' stories are heart-stoppingly dramatic. And when they have secured asylum, they tell the truth, about Cuban medicine both at home and abroad.

One of the things that sicken them, about their foreign service, is that they see what Cuba can provide: in equipment, in medications, in personnel. And yet this bounty is not available to Cubans (ordinary Cubans). It is sold to foreigners, to keep Castro's regime in business.

And this brings up a point concerning Castro's apologists: If they must concede that Cuban health care is a shambles, their fallback position is that it's all the fault of the American "embargo." And yet Cuba has no problem taking care of people in other countries, for show and profit. Moreover, American trade with Cuba in medical goods is virtually unfettered, and American humanitarian aid is considerable.

THE PRESENCE OF HEROES

Above, I spoke of doctor dissidence—and a particularly painful aspect of Moore-like myth-making is that some of the most courageous, most admirable, and most persecuted people on the island are doctors: men and women who have rebelled against health-care injustices and injustices in general. Oscar Elías Biscet is possibly the most noted of such people. He is in one of Castro's most wretched dungeons. Michael Moore would not even think of taking his cameras to it (and, in any case, he would not be allowed).

Biscet, like so many of the human-rights figures, happens to be "Afro-Cuban." And, as Mary Anastasia O'Grady of the *Wall Street Journal* has pointed out, the regime is especially vicious toward such figures, because they are supposed to be grateful for all the Revolution has done for them. Dr. Mendoza, who wrote about dengue, is also Afro-Cuban. So is Dr. Dariel "Darsi" Ferrer.

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He has managed to stay out of prison, somewhat miraculously—perhaps because there has been a fair amount of international attention on him. Ferrer operates the Center for Health and Human Rights. In 2005, he penned a statement called "Health Authorities and the Complicity of Silence." Though he has avoided prison, the regime has subjected him to terrible abuses, including *actos de repudio*, or acts of repudiation. These are those lovely episodes in which mobs are unleashed on your home, family, and friends.

Hilda Molina Morejón is another doctor-dissident—a stunning case. She was the country's chief neurosurgeon, the founder of the International Center for Neurological Restoration. She was also a deputy in the National Assembly. In the early 1990s, however, the regime informed her that the neurological center would start concentrating on foreigners, who would bring their hard currency. She objected, resigning her positions and returning the medals that Castro had awarded her. Then came *actos de repudio* and all the rest of it (but not prison). She has been forbidden to leave the island, and is banned from practicing medicine. She manages, despite the circumstances, to speak out.

"Live not by lies!" said Solzhenitsyn. "Live not by lies!" And yet Cuban Communism and its enablers have lived by them for a half-century. Totalitarians always depend on these lies. Robert Conquest, the great scholar of the Soviet Union, remembers a health official telling him, in private, that many hospitals lacked even running water. Yet public assertions were much different. And there have always been Potemkin-style visits, such as Moore's. He is simply more talented than most of the others.

Once Communism collapses in Cuba—or if it does—will there be a reckoning? When I was growing up, East Germany was presented to me, by misguided teachers and professors, as a fine social democracy. Earlier this year, a movie called *The Lives of Others* won an Academy Award. It told some of the truth about East Germany. What will future generations make of *Sicko*, particularly its portrait of Cuba?

In the meantime, the movie will do a lot of harm, cementing the myth of Cuban health care, among other myths. Castro's health minister, José Ramón Balaguer, is well pleased. "There's no doubt that a documentary by someone of Michael Moore's stature will help the world see the deeply humane principles of Cuban society," he said. You wonder, sometimes—in the face of constant and powerful myth-making—whether articles in magazines, and the daring and anguished testimonies of Hilda Molina et al., and the cries of an entire society, can make a dent.

I have an indelible memory, from the mid-1980s. Armando Valladares was at Harvard, speaking to students. He had emerged from 22 years in the Cuban gulag, and had written the memoir *Against All Hope*. (Valladares is often called the Cuban Solzhenitsyn.) In the Q&A, the kids spouted at him the usual line about Cuba: health care, literacy, and blacks. They had been carefully taught it by their teachers. And Valladares answered, in essence, "It's all untrue—a pack of lies. But even if it were true: Can't a country have those things without dictatorship, without tyranny, without gulags, without torture—with freedom?"

There is no omelet. There never is. But even if there were—so what? **NR**

■ BRITAIN

The Spell Is Broken

In the post-Blair world, we might ask: What did he ever do?

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

THERE was a certain pathos about the last days of Tony Blair's premiership. A sort of Grand Tour of Statesmanship—a visit to Africa, a swansong at the White House, one last Euro-Summit committing Britain to further loss of sovereignty—had been carefully timed and set up. An official memo leaked last year had sketched the emotional atmosphere to be created at and by these events. Its theme would be that a great star was making his exit, leaving the audience still wanting more.

On the day itself the media did their best to make the constitutional transfer of power from one prime minister to another seem a unique historical event. Blair left Downing Street for the last time as PM to applause, his departure only slightly marred by the report that police had interviewed him for the third time in the "Cash for Peerages" scandal a few days before. He received tributes from opponents and an ovation at Prime Minister's Question Time. Because this ran overtime, the BBC cut out the last five minutes and switched to a sports program. It has since apologized for this extraordinary misjudgment. That was the only technical hitch in Blair's long goodbye and it generated sympathy for him.

But the fact is that the audience didn't want more. They had wanted less for some time. And now that Blair has gone, he is hardly missed. It is as if the magician has left the stage, the spell has been broken, and we are left looking at rags that we once mistook for riches. His successor, Gordon Brown, has made a strong start. He has been helped to do so by terrorists who created a mood of national sobriety suited to Brown's stern personality. He has also appointed the former head of the Royal Navy, a formidable old sea salt by all accounts, to knock Britain's security into shape, among a mixed bag of "imaginative" appointments from all parties and none. We are now in a post-Blair world.

This may be a temporary mood—given time, Brown is perfectly capable of making us nostalgic for the Blair premiership—but it is the mood at present. And it raises serious questions, as they say in Scotland Yard, about the personality and political character of Tony Blair.

THE AMERICAN FRIEND

Such questions are unlikely to be asked by Americans who are mystified when they learn of Blair's unpopularity in Britain. The U.S. will miss Blair in an uncomplicated way. He defended the U.S.—both on Iraq and in general—with greater eloquence and forensic skill than any contemporary American politician. He made Prime Minister's Question Time essential watching for the

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C-SPAN crowd. Like Margaret Thatcher, he's a friend as well as an ally.

Some of Blair's stateside popularity is explained culturally as a result of the debating skills that a politician in the parliamentary tradition naturally acquires. But it is also traceable to Blair's manifest affection for the U.S.

That affection is genuine but also, in part, misinformed. He likes America because it is "modern" and "a young country," just as he gets irritated with Britain because it is mired in tradition, old, and in thrall to the "forces of conservatism." But all sorts of misconceptions are intertwined here. To start with, the U.S. is not a young country in a constitutional sense. In fact it is one of the oldest countries in the world, its constitution dating from 1789—which also saw the start of what was merely the first of five French republics. America considered more broadly is the continuation of British traditions of law and government, in particular the Whig tradition of ordered liberty. Politically speaking, America and Britain are the same age. Admittedly, America is "modern" in the sense of being in the forefront of new products, fashions, and ideas, but that is largely because its ancient constitutional and political traditions have fostered economic freedom, social progress, and technical innovation. Britain lags slightly behind the U.S., but it is still ahead of most of the world in such matters.

Blair's misunderstanding of America is a reflection of his deeper ideological commitment to the ideal of modernity itself. That produced one of the funnier episodes of Blair's first term. According to the well-informed satirical magazine *Private Eye*, Blair once arranged for a British tabloid to run an article by the Japanese prime minister. This would say nice things about the country and thus, it was hoped, avert any embarrassingly hostile receptions of the kind previous Japanese leaders had experienced in London at the hands of former POWs. To make assurance doubly sure, Alastair Campbell, Blair's press spokesman and Britain's own "Sultan of Spin," wrote a draft hymning the virtues of modern "Cool Britannia" with its supermodels, celebrity chefs, and brutalist fashion designers. When the Japanese received it, the prime minister added important things that had somehow been omitted, praising Britain for its tradition of fair play, cricket, impartial judges in wigs, tolerance and eccentricity, bobbies, the Queen, and in general the "forces of conservatism." The resulting mish-mash duly appeared in the tabloid, whose readers probably saw no contradiction in it.

Nor, in an important sense, is there any contradiction. "Cool Britannia" was successful because the traditions of tolerance, eccentricity, fair play, and the rest allow people to do their own thing, even if it happens to be designing dominatrix uniforms for respectable society ladies to wear at court. Blair did not see things that way. Rising in the Labour party, even in disguise, taught him that tradition was the enemy of the modern. He thought that making Britain a modern society would necessarily involve uprooting tradition and making all things new. And because his personality was uniquely suited to the television age, he was one of the few people who might pull this off. Alas, that is more difficult than it seems.

OUT WITH THE NEW

If, as Dr. Johnson said, patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel, "modernization" is the first refuge of the salesman. The salesman does not have to invent his product; by definition he has already got something to sell. All he has to do is to praise it—which, in modern advertising, generally means describing it as "New." Blair's first modernization success was accordingly the invention of "New Labour"—or, as Keith Waterhouse described it with a satirist's insight, "New! Improved! Labour." Tellingly, New Labour has never really advanced beyond a title. Attempts to fill the concept with ideological meaning have been many and various, but no single definition has ever established itself. "Socialism is what[ever] Labour governments do," said Old Labour's Herbert Morrison in the Fifties, responding with irritation to the dogmatist intellectuals of the Left; well, New Labour is whatever Tony Blair does. And while that may be unsatisfactory to political theorists, it suited Blair well enough. It gave him more or less total freedom of action for government.

But that freedom turns out to be a problem too. Traditions restrict the freedom of the statesman, and they have other drawbacks as well, but at least they give their bearer some idea of what to do in any given circumstances. A tradition is a sort of national habit. "We do things this way," it explains to the inquirer, going on to add, "and here are the reasons why." Those reasons may be false or questionable, but they are at least a start. The inheritor of a tradition knows roughly what direction to take. An advocate of "modernization" pure and simple is looking to the future for advice. Because the future is dumb, being still in the womb, the modernizer has to make things up as he goes along. Thus, he throws out ideas, initiatives, and solutions with a kind of abandon to see which of these wonderful new things will actually work in practice. And if one doesn't work, hey, no problem, plenty more where that came from, namely the back of his mind.

That sounds unfair and is probably an exaggeration, but look at some key episodes in Blair's prime-ministerial career. Take, for instance, his decision to pour money into the National Health Service. That decision was made by Blair—not then–Chancellor of the Exchequer Brown, who was annoyed that his budgetary decisions had been preempted by a prime-ministerial whim—on a television program about the latest crisis in health care.

By an interesting coincidence, Mrs. Thatcher had to appear on a television program in the midst of an earlier health-care crisis during her premiership. Blair had allegedly been thinking of public-sector reform for some time; Thatcher had confessedly not intended to tackle health-service reform until her next term; both made decisions on the hoof. Blair announced a massive transfer of several percent of British GDP into health—expenditure on the NHS has doubled in real terms since then—without requiring any reforms in return.

Thatcher, in contrast, announced the establishment of a ministerial committee to reform and improve the NHS. That committee met for a year and, in addition to increasing health spending, reorganized the NHS around the idea of an "internal market" that was itself in the tradition of economic liberalism started by Adam Smith. The reorganization, like the idea of an "internal market" itself, was an improvement but an imperfect one. By such tests as how many more patients were treated, or how many more operations performed, however, Thatcher's reform greatly outperformed Blair's in getting improvements commensurate with the extra spending.

The comparison, alas, does not end there. On coming to power in 1997, Blair abolished the semi-independent foundation hospitals that were a key part of the Thatcher reforms. That produced the crisis to which he responded with massive extra spending.

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Finally, when it was clear that simply spending more had not delivered the goods, Blair reintroduced the foundation hospitals (and a similar system of schools) that had been abolished. That sort of thing gives a bad name to the practice of following one bright idea with another.

MUDDLING THROUGH

The longer his administration lasted, the more Blair became known for eye-catching initiatives that either failed, or produced unwelcome results, or simply never went anywhere. Blair's constitutional reforms—devolved assemblies in Scotland and Wales, House of Lords reform, and the Human Rights Act granting judges the power to annul laws—brought about such unintended consequences as the rise of Scottish nationalism, a second chamber dependent on prime-ministerial patronage, and the release of known terrorists onto the streets of London. The subway bombings similarly elicited from him a whole raft of anti-terrorist proposals that were forgotten as soon as he mentioned them.

Cheerio

And even some of Blair's achievements dissolve on close examination. Take the economy. Blair did respect the achievements of the previous Tory government in creating efficient labor and financial markets and in setting a stable macroeconomic framework for the economy. He saw these, not incorrectly, as modernizing measures. Brown and he promised—and kept their promise—to make their administration live within the budgetary plans left by the Tories for their first term. With the exception of Brown's making the Bank of England independent, however, they embarked on few significant economic reforms. On the economy, indeed, Blair fails his own test of modernization, for an odd reason: He gave virtual control of economic and domestic policy to Brown, who frustrated many of the economic aims that Blair had. In addition, seeking to redistribute income by manipulating taxes and regulations, Brown has driven Britain's public spending to 45.3 percent of GDP—almost 5 percent above the OECD average. Not coincidentally, according to Allister Heath in *The* (London) *Spectator*, all the main English-speaking countries have grown faster than Britain since 1997. It is only against Europe that Britain's economic performance under Blair looks good.

Blair lacked the administrative stamina—a combination of dedication, hard work, and fortitude—that enabled Thatcher to achieve so much, driving her reforms through the bureaucratic committees and corridors of power. He behaved as Truman predicted Eisenhower, with his military experience, would behave: He gave orders and was annoyed to discover that they hadn't been carried out. Unlike Eisenhower, however, he then moved on to the next topic and the next bright idea. The result was that he won three elections but failed to achieve the domestic reforms he had set himself. In the light of Blair's domestic record, the public sense that he has disappeared leaving nothing behind him is understandable. He wasn't really there in the first place.

All of which means that his legacy is unduly dependent on foreign policy—or, in simple terms, Iraq and Europe. On the former, his reputation will depend on future events over which he has no control and on past events over which he had little control. For it seems that though President Bush listened to his close friend and ally over such matters as the second resolution in the U.N., and U.S. policy in the Israeli–Palestinian dispute, Blair was pretty much cut out of the decision-making process over the occupation of Iraq. We have no reason to believe that he would have made very brilliant or even merely different decisions. Still, as the junior partner in an expedition that now looks increasingly doomed, Blair was apparently dragged along paths not of his own choosing. He now has little hope of retrieving his reputation—unless, again for reasons beyond his control, he is saved by a successful democratic movement in Iraq (and perhaps Lebanon) that in 20 years traces back its success to Blair's part in the intervention. But the cost of this hypothetical gain has been the growth of serious anti-Americanism in Britain and the weakening of the Anglo-American special relationship. These developments were obviously not pursued by Blair, but they were partly caused and certainly aggravated by his failure to explain the Iraq War to the British in terms of national interest.

That leaves Europe—and Europe explains Blair's last diplomatic foray at Brussels in committing Britain to support a European constitution (lightly disguised as a treaty so that he and Brown could escape from their manifesto commitment to hold a referendum on a constitution). Blair's commitment to European unification was perhaps the most passionate and the least successful of his modernizing passions. He identified the European Union with modernity, perhaps even more than he did America, even though it is actually a rather old-fashioned centralized and bureaucratic structure—"yesterday's vision of the future" as Thatcher has put it. His practical frustrations and disappointments in Europe—he was once heard on an open mike waxing sarcastic on "the colleagues"—never dented his general enthusiasm for the European project. He feels obscurely guilty for failing to take Britain into Europe (though the Eurozone is, economically, doing worse than Britain). He compensated for this failure by signing on to a common European defense structure—something arguably much more destructive of U.K. sovereignty.

About this loss of sovereignty, he seems to feel no particular disquiet. And why should he? After all, Britain is an old country and Europe a modern organization. It remains to be seen, however, if the British have been sufficiently modernized to surrender their identity without a fight.

Blair made conventional references to the British as the finest people in the world, etc., in his final speeches. The remarks may have been sincere, but they sounded false and contrived. They did not fit comfortably alongside known Blairite preoccupations. Blair is now a senior peace envoy to the Middle East. In the Mideast peace process, he will certainly be in his element—a blend of internationalism and fantasy. He won't miss Britain, and vice versa. **NR**

PETER MACDIARMID

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FLORENCE KING

A Marie Antoinette, Just for Us

NEVER let it be said that Paris Hilton does not stimulate the intellect. I have woven her into a scholarly daisy chain featuring three famous novelists and a great statesman, and she fits.

It came about this way: When I decided to write about her, I had to consult the *Britannica* and two quotation dictionaries to find out who coined the expression "the great unwashed." Turns out it was Edward Bulwer-Lytton in *The Last Days of Pompeii*, though the usual bevy of spoilers known as "some scholars" credits Burke or Walter Scott. It didn't really matter who said it, but I wanted to cite the original version because I intended to use as my theme Herman Wouk's variation on it that turns up in his 1955 novel, *Marjorie Morningstar*: "The great unwashed worship the washed." Wouk used this as a throwaway line about snobbery in college sororities, but today it is the key to understanding Paris Hilton's America.

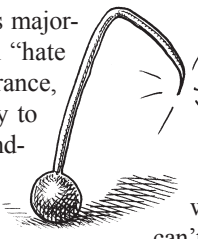
The traditional attitude toward the famous used to operate on the trade-off: They're no different from us/we're just like them. Movie magazines of the '30s and '40s took this tack, showing pictures of Joan Crawford mopping her kitchen floor and Susan Hayward chasing after her lively twin boys. I remember the old "movie books," as we called them, and we used to laugh over them. Nobody believed the stars didn't have plenty of hired help, but we accepted the ruse in the spirit of democratic idealism.

Many of today's celebrity magazines still encourage fans to identify with celebrities, as in *Us* magazine's "They're just like US" features about stars buying groceries and doing everyday chores. Despite their stratospheric incomes and palatial homes, we still strive for a Pogo-like mentality of "We have met the celebrities and they are us."

The exception to the longstanding rules of the game is Paris Hilton. She is nothing like us, we are nothing like her, and we have no wish to see this particular twain meet. The democratic ideal is dead and we, the Great Unwashed, are partying on its grave.

Paris worshipers fall into two groups. The smaller, unimportant one consists of the ditzier sort of teenage girls and displaced romantics of all ages and both sexes who really do like her for whatever reason.

The other, much larger group consists of purported Paris haters, and they are legion. They are the intelligent, well-educated, sophisticated people who have coined the clever portmanteau words describing her and her effect on contemporary life: *celebutante*, *celebridiot*, *celebrotramp*, *celebrobsession*, *celebrotropism*. They are also members of the self-satisfied and sanctimonious majority who are quick to condemn "hate speech" and call for 24-7 tolerance, yet they proclaimed Paris "easy to hate" and called her stupid, mindless, a dumb blonde, an airhead, and a no-talent twit with a cryogenic-lab IQ.



The opprobrium has been non-stop and fearless; eager and giggly and, when delivered on camera, accompanied by proud smirks and glittery eyes as hard and cold as agates. The outward evidence leaves no doubt that Paris is the most hated person in America, but outward evidence is worthless when dealing with human nature. People devote the better part of their lives to the task of fooling themselves, and one of their favorite techniques is protesting too much.

Nobody hates Paris Hilton. On the contrary, we worship her as our only remaining weapon against the relentless democracy that has enfolded us like a grotty shroud and turned us all into an undifferentiated Great Unwashed. Deprived of the psychological security bestowed by hierarchy, pecking orders, and a sense of ordained place, we struggle constantly against the unspoken and inadmissible knowledge that equality is standing on our collective air hose in hobnailed boots.

We need to look up to somebody, anybody; for something, anything. Somebody who can do no wrong to revive that great unsung victim of egalitarian fairplay known as *carte blanche*. We need, in short, exactly what Paris provides with such effortless and uncanny perceptiveness: our very own Marie Antoinette.

The resemblance is clone-like. Paris's Hall of Mirrors is the runway, the red carpet, and the perp walk, but her swanking stride never changes. They also share the same undeveloped schoolgirlish sense of humor that tends to come out wrong and fall flat, leaving a false impression of flippant cruelty. Legions of sympathetic historians, having convinced themselves that the Queen of France was actually tragic and maternal, have insisted that she never said "Let them eat cake." But it wasn't Marie Antoinette who was tragic and maternal, it was Norma Shearer in the movie.

Proof that she really did say it can be found in something in the same vein that Paris Hilton said when asked about Wal-Mart: "What do they sell? Walls?" In both cases, all the courtiers laughed uproariously without reflecting that a schoolgirl can't tell a bon mot from a bon-bon.

We need Paris and we know it, which is why at least one NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE blogger/analyst asks, "How is it that so many readers actually seem sympathetic to Paris Hilton?" and then quotes letters that typically begin, "I don't like Paris Hilton, but . . ." We revel in her because she's the only panache in town. Our political leadership has sunk so low that we can't elect anything better than competent mediocrities, so all we have left are those who are "famous for being famous." The need to look up, no matter at what, is being satisfied now by Paris. It matters not that, as some have said, "she doesn't deserve to be famous." That hasn't bothered us up to now, so why accuse Paris? Fame itself and by itself is the only kind of specialness we have left, and we are making the most of it. **NR**

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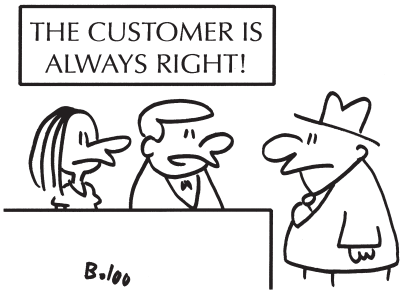
HELP!!!!

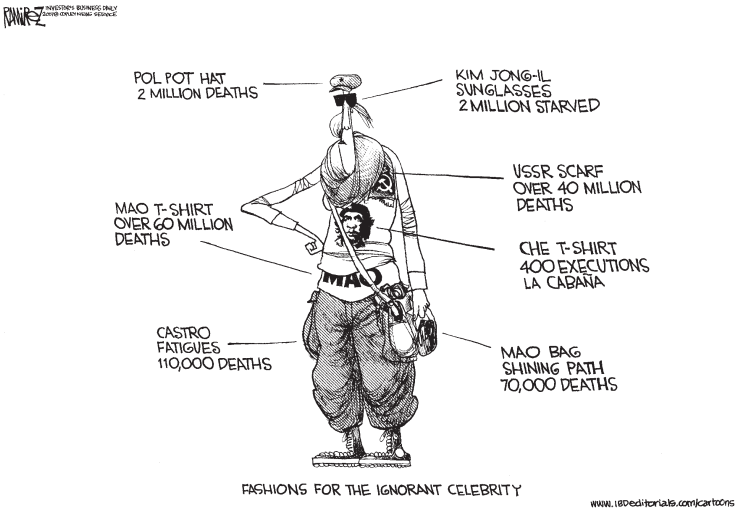
Together Again

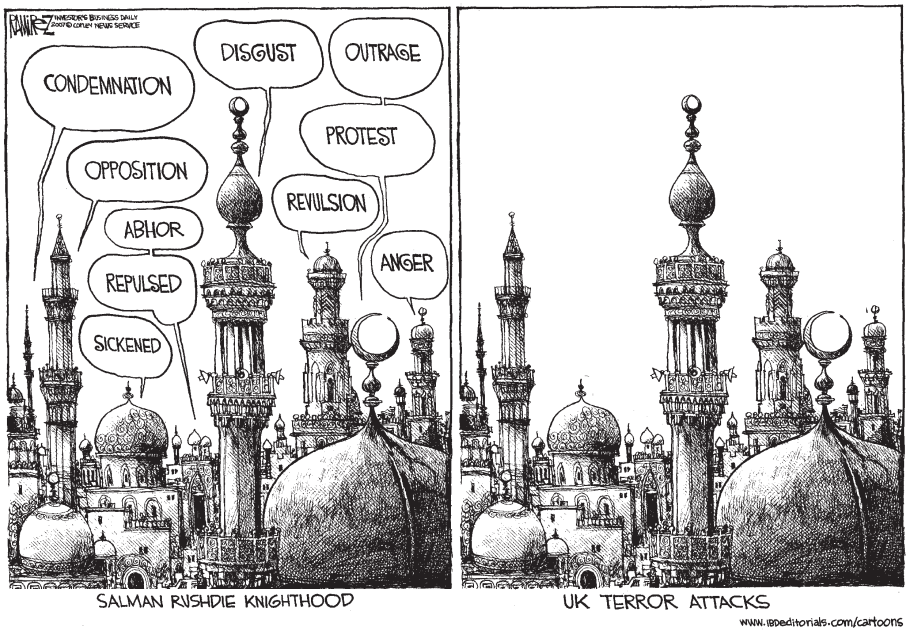
Bill warms up an Iowa crowd
(Five minutes are all he's allowed);
Then gamely accepts a stage stool—
Dreaming of a Lincoln Room Yule.
Hill, sporting a permanent smile,
Massages the crowd in a style
So frantically cheerful, I think,
Ye gods, can this be Clinton, Inc.?

—W. H. von Dreele



"We've talked it over and we've decided that you must not be a customer."





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the long view

ROB LONG

Transcript from the al-Jazeera political talk show *The al-Irshad Group* July 25, 2007

AL-IRSHAD: "Issue One! No Go in Glasgow! A failed bombing attempt in the Scottish city of Glasgow follows hard on the heels of two such failures in the city of London. Question: Is worldwide jihad a bust? Most Exalted Imam Qu'Turush?"

QU'TURUSH: "No, no, no. Look, this is the kind of thing that's to be expected. Not everything is going to be perfect. And I just wish the media would start reporting the good news about—"

SALIL FAQTB: "Come on! Face the facts! The current system—"

QU'TURUSH: "Can I finish?"

SALIL FAQTB: "—is losing its focus on the Great Satan and the Jewish—"

QU'TURUSH: "Let me finish. Let me finish. The media insists on reporting all of the bad news, I mean, that's all they ever talk about—all of the bombs that don't go off, the terror cells that get infiltrated and broken up, the uranium that doesn't get enriched—you know, it's no wonder we're having a hard time in some of these terror organizations recruiting new suicide bombers with all of this bad, negative press. Notice how they never talk about Holland, which is basically ours. Or Germany. Or the huge mosque in London? It's always the bad news."

AL-IRSHAD: "It's all doomsaying from the media? Response, Salil Faqtb, Islamic Revolutionary Party strategist."

SALIL FAQTB: "That's nonsense! Qu'Turush, you are a complacent dog! You are like the shopkeeper who sells to the Jew! You blame the media when in fact it is—"

QU'TURUSH: "Die! Die a thousand deaths you inverted devil!"

SALIL FAQTB: "Son of a whore let me finish! I was gracious enough to let you speak, you miserable unclean pig. The truth is we are failing in worldwide jihad. Our bombs are not going off. Our uranium remains unweaponized. And to blame the media is simply to hide your head in the desert sand."

AL-IRSHAD: "Ali Ba'Nasri, commentator on al-Jazeera's *Hardstones*—thoughts?"

ALI BA'NASRI: "Look, this is politics, okay? It's not about new leadership or the media or anything like that. It's simply a case of a few bombs that didn't go off and—"

SALIL FAQTB: "—because we're not preparing our young children. Recent statistics suggest that over 75 percent of our children do not expect to blow themselves up in their lifetimes. What a terrible indictment of our madrassah system."

ALI BA'NASRI: "And what's your solution? Higher taxes?"

QU'TURUSH: "You are both sodomites."

AL-IRSHAD: "Exit question! Is jihad over? Qu'Turush?"

QU'TURUSH: "No, but the media wants it to be."

AL-IRSHAD: "Ali Ba'Nasri?"

ALI BA'NASRI: "It's taking a breather."

AL-IRSHAD: "Salil Faqtb?"

SALIL FAQTB: "Yes. We have killed it with our multicultural, 'anything goes' attitude."

AL-IRSHAD: "You are all mincing homosexual Jewish libertines! The correct answer is, No! Jihad remains effective. Issue Two! Pillory Hillary? Hillary Clinton, the whore senator wife of the disgraced unbelieving former president, is currently surging in the polls for the upcoming presidential election. Is her probable ascension to that post a net positive or a net negative to worldwide jihad? Salil?"

SALIL FAQTB: "Positive. When Allah sees the decadent Western pseudo-power being led by a brazen woman, showing off her hair and bare arms like a promiscuous prostitute, He will crush the indolent, feminized nation of Satan with a thousand million fiery thunderbolts."

ALI BA'NASRI: "You're nuts."

SALIL FAQTB: "How dare you! Prepare to be set on fire!"

ALI BA'NASRI: "Get off me, perv! What is that, a Bic lighter? Stop it!"

AL-IRSHAD: "Gentlemen! Please!"

ALI BA'NASRI: "Can we get real, for just a second? I know that Salil's far-right cabal loves to predict Allah's wrath—which is blasphemy, by the way, just for the record—"

SALIL FAQTB: "Die, pig!"

ALI BA'NASRI: "—but the truth here is that Hillary Clinton is probably a net negative. She'll be unable to pull out of Iraq because she's a Democrat, and can't be seen as soft on terrorism, and—"

SALIL FAQTB: "How do you know so much about their system, devil?"

ALI BA'NASRI: "I read the *New York Times*."

SALIL FAQTB: "You prefer to get your information from Satan himself?"

ALI BA'NASRI: "Honestly, it's a lot more sympathetic than you'd think."

QU'TURUSH: "He's right. That's where I go when I want to hear about some of the good, positive things that are happening in jihad."

AL-IRSHAD: "The correct answer is, President Hillary Clinton would be a net positive to the cause of jihad. At the sight of an uncovered female president, American men would be plunged into an insane sexual frenzy and distracted from their highly effective airport vigilance! Bye bye!"

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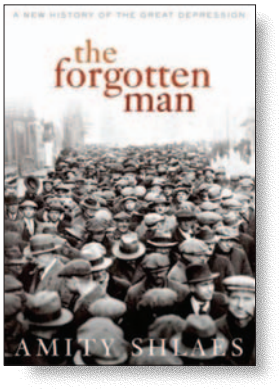
Beyond the Myth



The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression, by Amity Shlaes (HarperCollins, 480 pp., $26.95)

STEVEN F. HAYWARD

THIS new book is the finest history of the Great Depression ever written. Hold on—this is supposed to be a review, not a dust-jacket blurb; but it can't be helped. Although there are several fine revisionist works about the Great Depression and the New Deal, Shlaes's achievement stands out for the devastating effect of its understated prose and for its wide sweep of characters and themes. It deserves to become the preeminent revisionist history for general readers.

The "forgotten man" theme arises from the ideological sleight of hand at the core of the New Deal. The phrase originated with the supposed "Social Darwinist" William Graham Sumner, who had in mind the taxpayer who was the forgotten third party when politicians dreamt up schemes of social improvement that depended on the forgotten man to provide the means. The New Deal turned this on its head through its portrayal of the "forgotten man" as the little guy left behind in the collapse of economic growth. Instead of being the productive citizen best left alone by government, the forgotten man of the New Deal was the lowly citizen whose salvation depended on government.

Most revisionist histories of the Depression depend on subsequent economic insights coupled with hindsight—a problem Shlaes notes early in her narrative: "Neither the standard history [that glorifies FDR and the New Deal] nor the standard rebuttal entirely captures the realities of the period." Shlaes's answer is to begin with a portrait of the 1920s that puts us inside the perspectives of the key figures of the time. "The 1920s was a great decade of true economic gains," she writes, "a period whose strong positive aspects have been obscured by the troubles that followed." Shlaes prompts the thought that the real tragedy of the Great Crash was that Calvin Coolidge had not sought re-election in 1928; he could have spared us the "priggish" (Shlaes's word) personality—and social-engineering mentality—of Herbert Hoover. (Of him, Coolidge shrewdly observed: "That man has offered me unsolicited advice for six years, all of it bad.") Had we followed the course we did in the sharp recession of 1921, when Warren Harding's government let markets correct and adjust, the aftermath of the Great Crash might have been short and mild compared with what happened.

Shlaes rids us of the temptation of thinking that Hoover, had he contrived reelection in 1932, might have avoided the macroeconomic mistakes FDR made. Instead of letting markets correct, Hoover raised taxes, signed the disastrous Smoot-Hawley tariff, and inveighed against short-sellers and other ostensible market manipulators. Shlaes is not the first to observe that Hoover and FDR represented, in political scientist Gordon Lloyd's phrase, "the two faces of liberalism," but she offers rich detail to the comparison. Both men lacked confidence in markets, and Hoover's interventions between the Crash in 1929 and FDR's accession in 1933 paved the way for the New Deal: "From 1929 to 1940, from Hoover to Roosevelt, government intervention helped to make the Depression Great."

Two things propelled FDR's New Deal beyond the depredations that would have come from Hoover's social-engineering mentality: the presence of the intellectuals and political operatives whom Shlaes calls "the pilgrims," and FDR's own intellectual instability combined with his political opportunism. "The pilgrims" refers to the handful of future New Deal intellectuals, Rexford Tugwell being the most prominent among them, who made a junket to the Soviet Union in 1927 that culminated in a six-hour interview with Stalin. Here Shlaes's prose is at its understated best. She does not portray the pilgrims as crypto-Communists bamboozled by Potemkin tours, though an element of that gullibility is inescapably present. Rather she discerns the "dreamy" cast of mind that was soon to create the New Deal's belief in vague, non-Marxist central planning. "The heroes [of the USSR] were not precisely *their* heroes," Shlaes writes. "Still, the meetings had their effect. The travelers were now transformed from obscure analysts of the Soviet Union into bearers of news. . . . The conservatives were having their day, and the planners would get theirs." Giddy with excitement, the pilgrims returned to the U.S. on the steamship *Leviathan*, "and the irony of that name may not have escaped some of them."

With the election of FDR, the pilgrims had their chance. Those conservatives who lately have inclined to some sentimental affection for FDR (this includes Conrad Black and, occasionally, this writer) will be roundly disabused by the damning portrait Shlaes offers. "Roosevelt was not an ideologue or a radical," she judges, but his affinity for experimentation and improvisation yielded inconsistent and destabilizing economic policy at a time when certainty was the most needful thing. FDR's intellectual instability was terrifying in its fullness; fortunately, it was tempered by the rivalries and disagreements within his menagerie of New Dealers, and by the countervailing power of American political institutions (which prevented him from, e.g., packing the Supreme Court).

When presidential candidate Ronald Reagan remarked that "fascism was

Mr. Hayward is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of *The Age of Reagan: The Fall of the Old Liberal Order, 1964–1980.*

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really the basis of the New Deal," liberals and the media hooted; the *Washington Post* huffed that "several historians of the New Deal period questioned by the *Washington Post* said they had no idea what Reagan was referring to." Thanks to Shlaes's book, journalists in the future will not be able to plead such ignorance: She notes that FDR's first attempt at centralized economic planning, the National Recovery Administration (NRA), owed its inspiration in part to Mussolini's Italian model. The NRA's ineffectuality could be demonstrated in a number of theoretical or technical ways, but Shlaes captures the futility of the enterprise in two magnificent sentences: "In a period of a year, 10,000 pages of law had been created [by the NRA], a figure that one had to compare with the mere 2,735 pages that constituted federal statute law. In twelve months, the NRA had generated more paper than the entire legislative output of the federal government since 1789."

But when the Supreme Court saved FDR from this folly by ruling it unconstitutional, FDR veered farther left, with punitive tax measures that deterred capital formation and investment, and prosecutions of the rich (especially Samuel Insull and Andrew Mellon) that were purely political. The result of these and other ill-conceived measures was a needlessly prolonged Great Depression.

Shlaes offers a new gloss on the old theme of how FDR used the Depression to craft the durable New Deal coalition. Here her narrative sparkles, as she recounts how FDR transformed the failures of his economic policy to his political advantage in the 1936 election. The failure of the New Deal to deliver meaningful economic growth lent paradoxical validity to FDR's class-warfare rhetoric: "Many in the country believed that the United States was actually becoming the society of social classes that Roosevelt now described in his speeches. And they responded accordingly," that is, by re-electing Roosevelt. The secret was purposely dividing people into interest groups, and pandering to enough of them to create a majority.

As the story approaches the end of the 1930s, Shlaes's most interesting subtext comes to the fore: the evolution of FDR's 1940 challenger Wendell Willkie. In the early chapters Willkie is seen as a naïve utility executive with reformist sympathies who thought he could cut deals with FDR, only to be bitterly disappointed when he was ground up along with the rest of the malefactors of great wealth. He couldn't say he wasn't warned. Insull told Willkie in 1934: "Mr. Willkie, when you are older you will know more."

Insull was right. By 1938, by which time the Depression was coming to seem permanent, Willkie had joined the Republican party, and, because of his trenchant criticisms of the New Deal, was emerging as a surprise candidate for the GOP presidential nomination. The GOP had done well in 1938, and, according to Shlaes, "the reputation of the New Deal was continuing to drop": "People were taking in the longer-term consequences of all the experiments." Willkie's themes in the campaign that followed in some ways prefigure Reagan in 1980: "I saw that we must substitute for the philosophy of distributed scarcity the philosophy of unlimited productivity," Willkie said in his kickoff speech; "I stand for the restoration of full production and re-employment by private enterprise in America." Willkie manfully attempted to reclaim the "forgotten man" theme for Republicans: "What that man wanted us to remember was his chance—his right—to take part in our great American adventure." The Gipper could hardly have put it better.

But looming in the background, Shlaes thinks, was the European war, and the Republicans' latent isolationism diluted their appeal. Although Willkie was an internationalist, FDR was a more convincing one. "As leaders and oppositions since have discovered," Shlaes writes, "war trumps everything—economics as well as politics." In the absence of the specter in Europe, Shlaes thinks Willkie might have defeated Roosevelt. Shlaes's judgment about Willkie and the 1940 election is probably correct, but it is the only thinly argued part of *The Forgotten Man*. To complete this account, more needs to be said about the cognitive dissonance that characterizes public opinion toward America's global involvement. (FDR, for example, was quietly consulting pollsters during this time to determine how far he could go with his European policy.)

Shlaes leaves it to the reader to project lessons forward to our own time. The Democratic party lived large on FDR's high-tax, class-warfare playbook for nearly two generations. The Reagan Revolution put some of it into receivership, but the impulse to tax, regulate, and plan the economy remains embedded in contemporary liberalism, with John Edwards, among others, doing his best to revive New Deal–style populism and animus against wealth. We are now so far removed from the economic ruin of the New Deal's ill-considered economic interventionism that resistance to grand central fixes for health care, global warming, or outsourcing may be on the wane. With this prospect in mind, Shlaes's book could be called *The Forgotten Lesson*. **NR**

GESTURE FROM *THE SEARCHERS*

As savage in this shucking as that Scar
John Wayne will scalp (off-frame) before he's through,
He stands in stirrups (long shot, on his mount),
Looks down on smoke that blacks the Texas blue,
And like his alter-ego's avatar,
Prepares to bring an Indian to account.
His rifle raised like judgment day to come,
He shakes the beaded, buckskinned scabbard from
It in one motion fueled with all the force
Of love and hate, then spurs the lathered horse
Toward corpses, burning smokehouse, stock, and ranch.
The gesture registers: He's free at last
To kill whatever moved him in his past,
Inflicting what no death will ever stanch.

—LEN KRISAK

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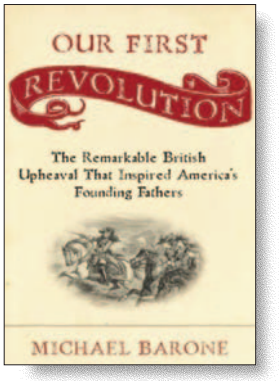
1688 And All That



Our First Revolution: The Remarkable British Upheaval That Inspired America's Founding Fathers, by Michael Barone (Crown, 352 pp., $25.95)

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

Clio, that most elusive of Muses, can be glimpsed, but never caught. The interpretation of history is forever in flux, as much reflection of the present as window on the past. There are few better examples of this than England's turbulent 17th century. Depending on whom you asked, and when, its conflicts were painful, but ultimately progressive; painful, but ultimately reactionary; or painful, but ultimately pointless. The natural response to the publication of yet another interpretation of one of the pivotal events of that century, the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, is to ask, what *now?*

According to Michael Barone, the answer is star-spangled Macaulay, classic Whig history with a distinctly American accent. The Glorious Revolution was, he writes, America's "first revolution," "a reference point" and "a glowing example" for the American Founders. The ghosts of P. T. Barnum and Betsy Ross will be unable to resist a smile at those words. To describe England's last revolution, a characteristic mix of royal infighting and aristocratic maneuver, as *American* is, in its endearing exaggeration and patriotic pride, more typically American than anything that actually happened in 1688. That said, Barone's broader point holds true, but with one important caveat. The Founders *were* inspired by the Glorious Revolution, but less by its reality than by its myth. The same may well be true of its latest chronicler.

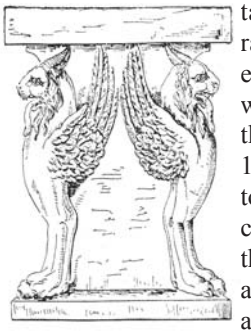
That hasn't stopped him from writing an excellent, well-researched overview of the prelude, consummation, and consequences of the revolution that is his topic and his totem, the revolution that saw off James II, England's last Catholic king, and with him the last serious chance that the nation would succumb to absolute monarchy. *Our First Revolution* is no small achievement. The history of England in the 1680s is one of whirligig allegiance, helter-skelter intrigue, and perilous diplomatic gamesmanship. To retell it, as Barone does, in a manner that's both informative and easily accessible to the general reader, demonstrates a way with a story that would be beneath the dignity, and beyond the skills, of many academic historians.

That's not to say that the book is without its flaws. The most significant is, somehow, also very American. Barone is a product of a country that is, in a number of respects, history's happiest accident, so it's perhaps not surprising that, despite some hints to this effect, he cannot quite bring himself to admit the extent to which the Glorious Revolution was the product, not of optimism, but of pessimism. Its inspiration lay not in the quest for freedom, but in the fear of a return to the disorder of the six or so preceding decades, decades that had seen an intellectual, moral, and political unraveling so profound that it led to warfare, regicide, and dictatorship. When Hobbes, the finest philosopher of the age, wrote that the absence of a common, recognized authority would mean war ("and such a war as is of every man against every man"), he was writing from experience: Barone notes that the English civil war claimed perhaps 190,000 lives, as a percentage of the population more than that accounted for by the Kaiser or Hitler. In Scotland and Ireland the toll was still worse.

Despite that, Barone feels able to dismiss the upheavals of civil war and republican government as something of an irrelevance. This is to ignore the fact that the anxieties that fueled the Glorious Revolution were a direct response to the savage lessons of those earlier years. And so was the willingness to overthrow a monarch, or even monarchy itself, if that's what it took to keep the peace.

Those lessons began in the 1620s. On one side the Stuarts, James I and, more fatefully, his son Charles I, were trying to create a modern centralized despotism of the type rapidly gaining ground across the Channel. On the other were England's merchant class and much of its gentry, jealous of privileges and liberties dating back to the Middle Ages. Charles tried to trump these ancient traditions with superstition: the belief that a king ruled by divine right. But a century into the Reformation, the Almighty was not what He once had been. Kings might rely on God, but did God rely on kings? And if God did not rely on kings, what did He have to say about the rest of the social order?

In their attempt to find out, the English rejected Charles, they rejected the egalitarianism of the mid-century radicals, they rejected Puritan excess, they rejected Cromwell's Commonwealth, and they rejected military rule. In 1660 they returned, exhausted, to monarchy and Charles II, a cheery cynic who understood that *faute de mieux* was as good a reason as any to be accepted as king. It's a measure of his political skills that Charles (who had no legitimate children) was able to ensure that his brother James, a devout Catholic, would succeed him. It's a measure of his perceptiveness that he thought that his dour and stubborn sibling would hold the job for less than four years. In the event, James II, who came to the throne in 1685 dreaming of Catholic restoration and hog-tied parliaments, hung on for just over 46 months. By early 1689, he had



Mr. Stuttaford is a contributing editor of National Review Online.

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been replaced by William of Orange, a safely Protestant Dutch prince, and William's wife, Mary, who was not only a safely Protestant English princess, but James's eldest daughter, a Goneril all his own.

It may fit a little awkwardly with his overall thesis of 1688 as a signpost pointing to the liberties of an independent America, but Barone doesn't dodge the degree to which religious intolerance was responsible for James's downfall. The U.S. Constitution may have provided for absolute religious freedom, but its architects lived in a more safely secular environment. Wary survivors in an age of religious fury, the revolutionaries of 1688 enjoyed no such luxury. Religion needed to be tamed, fenced-in, *watched*. They feared that toleration of some expressions of religious belief might come at too high a price. In that sense, the First Amendment would, to them, have looked like a suicide pact. A militant Catholicism was not only resurgent on the European mainland, but had become the ideological enabler of despotism. Not to resist James's attempts to foster a Catholic revival would have been madness. When the king demonstrated that he was prepared to use the tools of absolutism to get his way, he merely proved his opposition's point.

Barone faces a similar problem in discussing the revolution's immediate aftermath. The passages in which he describes it come across as a little confused, incoherent, and ambiguous. There's a good reason for that: These events were confused, incoherent, and ambiguous. Barone's difficulty is that he needs them to form a clear path to Philadelphia. What he gets instead is a muddle. What he misses is that that was the idea.

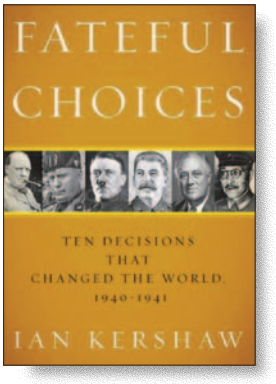
William's motive in coming over from the Netherlands to grab the crown was partly dynastic, but primarily strategic. He wanted to lock England into an alliance against Louis XIV. The rest, so far as he was concerned, was conversation. That left those who supported him with the job of securing social peace and, while they were at it, their own privileges. With despotism discredited (its very arbitrariness made it the antithesis of order), and a republic looking too tricky to contemplate, they tried to dream up an answer to the question of where sovereignty really lay. This led to some fine-sounding declarations ambiguous enough to satisfy just about every faction. These efforts were then supplemented by years of piecemeal legislation—ad hoc, gradualist (after an initial flurry), and pragmatic—that helped shape a new constitution without ever defining it. The most satisfactory answer, it was discovered, to the big questions, was silence. It's difficult to think of anything less like the spirit of Philadelphia in 1787.

These events were confused, incoherent, and ambiguous. They were a muddle—and that was the idea.

To find a connection it's necessary (and a touch anachronistic) to treat the Glorious Revolution settlement as a whole, but that's what the American Founders seem to have done. To them these laws (which included the promotion, ironically, of greater religious toleration, the enactment of a bill of rights that was an obvious predecessor of its American namesake, and provisions designed to promote the independence of Parliament) were a precedent. They were both a fumbling codification and, in their apparent success, a definitive proof of the notion that sovereignty was too potent to be entrusted to one person or, indeed, one institution. Look at this another way, however, and liberty becomes a practical means, not an idealistic end—a crucial distinction largely invisible to those who used the romantic myth of a Patrick Henry–style 1688 as a rallying cry for the English in America nearly a century later.

Nevertheless, the fact that this dispersal of sovereignty was accomplished by bestowing rights and freedoms upon a significant portion of the population was *not* a myth. As Barone convincingly shows, the fragmentation of the old order left a space for the growth of free enterprise and freer enquiry, a space in which the ideas that became America could flourish, a space that was, essentially, an accident, the happiest of accidents. **NR**

Turning Points



Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions That Changed the World, 1940–1941, by Ian Kershaw (Penguin, 656 pp., $35)

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

Ian Kershaw is the author of a magisterial biography of Hitler, in which he showed how the will-power of that solitary malign character was enough to overthrow the European state system, and lead to the deaths of tens of millions. Hitler's political adversaries both in Germany and abroad, he has argued, lacked an equivalent will-power to stop him, and their inadequacy was the key to his successes. Impersonal demographic, economic, and cultural forces were of course in operation, but for Kershaw these are not the controlling factors that Marxists or postmodernists think they are. He holds the good old traditional view that the personality of those making the decisions for their state and society ultimately determines events. Equally traditionally, he favors a fluent narrative prose style. *Fateful Choices* may have nothing startlingly new to add, but with calm authority dissects ten leadership decisions essential to understanding the course of World War II.

Hitler combined a flair for geo-strategy with vile prejudice, and this certainly made it hard to predict what he would do. At the time, it was more or less unbelievable that he really did think that Communism was a Jewish conspiracy,

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and that his most basic aspiration was to wipe this illusory phenomenon from the face of the earth. Quite wrongly, his opponents tended to imagine that he would act as they would in his position. Similarly, Hitler in turn imagined that his worldview corresponded to reality. In particular, he supposed that his stunning blitzkrieg against France in May 1940 would necessarily oblige Britain to come to terms, thus leaving him a free hand in Europe.

By coincidence, Churchill had become prime minister on the very day that the blitzkrieg opened. He possessed the willpower that so far had been absent. For him, resistance to Hitler was a moral as well as a political imperative, no matter what the cost to Britain or its standing in the world. But at the end of May, with Dunkirk in the offing, Lord Halifax, the foreign minister, proposed in the cabinet to put out feelers through Mussolini to discover whether it was possible to come to terms with Hitler. Britain, he said, had nothing to lose by such a step. Several historians have speculated whether he entertained some prospect of a Vichyite collaboration with himself in the role of a Pétain. Churchill had to reject anything that smacked of weakness or surrender, while also ensuring that Halifax did not resign, and so open a divide in public opinion. Kershaw praises the deft way he managed this crucial moment, with exactly the right appeal to natural patriotism in the cabinet, parliament, and the country. At that point, failure of resolve on the part of Churchill might well have resulted in a very different historical outcome.

Holding off any prospect of a successful German invasion, the British navy and air force created a stalemate. Germany had won in Europe and yet not won, while England had lost and yet not lost. Mussolini was quick to draw the wrong conclusion that this was the moment to obtain his share of any spoils available. Kershaw is rightly scornful of his irresponsibility, his ambitions for empire, and his pique at Hitler's superior military power. He had picked up Albania, an easy target, and was then pressured by Ciano, his son-in-law and foreign minister, into invading Greece. According to Kershaw, this was the worst decision of the war, nothing less than an "imbecility." Mussolini proved more of a nuisance than an ally, and towards the end of the war Hitler came to blame him bitterly.

In the strange hiatus after the fall of France, an alternative strategy was available to Hitler: to attack Britain through the Mediterranean, seizing Gibraltar, Malta, and Egypt, cutting off its oil supplies, and weakening its hold on the Empire. Kershaw wonders whether this might not have worked to his advantage. As it turned out, however, General Franco was shrewd enough to reserve his position. It was impossible to reconcile the rival demands of Spain, Italy, and France, and in any case Hitler's heart was not in it. By the end of 1940 he had convinced himself that Britain was holding out only in the hope that eventually the Soviet Union would come to the rescue. Fulfillment of his long-cherished fantasy of rooting out Bolshevism and the Jews was irresistibly appealing. The logic that the road to London lay through Moscow was a tribute to his psychological perversity.

Kershaw is particularly good at describing the real or perceived constraints operating on each of the wartime leaders. Hitler assumed that he had only a limited time in which to conquer the Soviet Union, and then Britain. The United States, he appreciated, would not permit the defeat of Britain but nonetheless needed another year or two in which to bring its forces up to strength, and intervene militarily. That calculation prompted the timing of the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.

Churchill had to persuade Roosevelt that Nazism could not be defeated without American help. President Roosevelt always knew that a Europe ruled by a victorious Hitler was bound to lead to a war that the U.S. would have to fight alone and at a geographic disadvantage. Congress and swathes of public opinion were anxious to stay out of another quarrel perceived as European, however, and Roosevelt could take only a series of small steps, to wage "undeclared war." Material help for Britain was a key decision. Many at the time were critical of what appeared far too extreme a caution, but Kershaw thinks that Roosevelt for all his "impenetrable personality" judged events more or less correctly.

The Japanese leadership almost unanimously reached the mistaken conclusion in 1940 that Hitler had won, and they joined Germany and Italy through the Tripartite Pact. They too believed that they had only a brief time in which to obtain their share of the spoils. The debate about how to achieve an empire—the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere—was impelled by some sort of inferiority complex that Japan was being denied its rightful preeminence in the world. America was to blame for this, in particular for continuing to support China against Japan. It is still surprising that those who were pressing for war had no idea how Japan could defeat the U.S., but should nevertheless make the attempt. Greed, a military tradition, and the culture's sense of honor generated an atmosphere of irrationality that culminated in Pearl Harbor. Hitler's immediate declaration of war on the U.S. is usually seen as puzzling, if not wild. Kershaw's explanation is that Hitler was making sure to play the U.S. and Japan off against each other, and so buy himself more time.

A large literature has examined Stalin's mystifying decision to trust to the pact he had signed with Hitler in 1939. In the face of mounting intelligence, most of it first-class, Stalin refused to believe that Hitler

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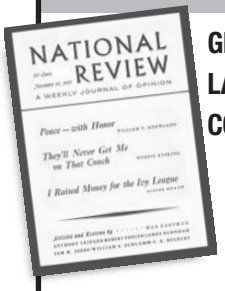
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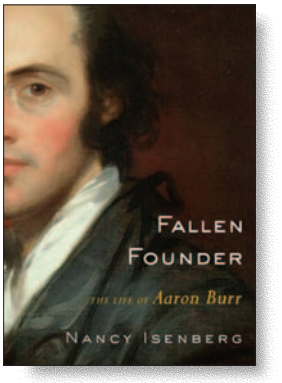
was preparing invasion. All such warning was merely disinformation put out by the desperate British. How could so paranoid a dictator fall into such a trap? The answer seems to be that Stalin took it for granted that Hitler employed the same calculus of power that he did, and would never attack in the East until he had settled with Britain. He could not acknowledge that his reign of terror, and particularly his bloody purging of the Red Army, had made the Soviet Union an easy prey in Hitler's eyes. The pre-war pact benefited Hitler, he reckoned, and would last accordingly until that was no longer the case, and so he convinced himself that Hitler's visceral fear of Bolshevism must be secondary. This misjudgment was of historic proportions, leading to death and destruction on a scale that almost brought about the end of the Soviet Union.

The capture of more and more territory gave Hitler the possibility of putting into practice the mass murder of Jews. War and conquest had enabled him to have victims and willing accomplices. In a final and very telling chapter, Kershaw describes what an essential part of Hitler's personality this was. In his innermost self, Hitler had conceived this crime in his early days in Vienna. When it became operationally feasible, time and again he was to refer to a speech he had given in 1939, prophesying the extermination of the Jews in the event of war. Not a policy decision that could have been altered, this was the fulfillment of his dark spirit.

Kershaw continually raises the question whether other strategies and choices on the part of decision-makers might have produced different victors and losers. On the whole, he thinks that there was little real possibility of any variant outcome, granted the individuals concerned and their societies. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, even the Japanese rulers, all operated closed or totalitarian systems devised by and for themselves. Personal flaws of character on the part of these leaders grew into systemic flaws in what seems a quasi-deterministic way. In the last resort, the Axis lost the war because the mistakes of their leaders could not be rectified. The compelling lesson of *Fateful Choices* is that democracy is one of the strongest impersonal forces, so long as there is a Churchill or a Roosevelt with the character and willpower to exemplify it. **NR**

Burr in the Saddle



Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr, by Nancy Isenberg (Viking, 544 pp., $29.95)

SARAH BRAMWELL

HISTORIAN Nancy Isenberg's attempt, in this new book, to rehabilitate Aaron Burr brings to mind the fifth labor of Hercules: cleaning the Augean stables in a single day. So much filth has accumulated around him, over the ages, that clearing his name seems an impossible task. All the abuse flung at Burr by his political enemies—charges of sexual debauchery, overweening ambition, fiscal profligacy, and, ultimately, treason—still sticks to him like glue.

If previous historians have offered less than charitable interpretations of Burr's motives and actions, Isenberg is more than generous in *Fallen Founder*. She goes to great pains to unearth the "real" Aaron Burr: a man possessed of deep principles, unfailing as a gentleman, an enlightened thinker with a strong sense of personal dignity. His early childhood was marked by death—two and a half years into his life, Burr had lost his parents and grandparents, and had himself twice come close to the grave. (Those parents and grandparents were no small figures: His maternal grandfather was the theologian Jonathan Edwards, his father, Aaron Burr Sr., the president of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton.)

Burr's promising early life presaged great things, making his eventual fall from grace all the more dismaying. His successful Princeton years began at age 13 (the youngest in his class), and shortly after graduating he enlisted in the Revolutionary army, in which he gained national glory through his bravery and daring. He chose a career in law and was a hardworking and talented litigator. By the age of 45, when Burr had just begun his first term as vice president of the United States, he had served in the New York state assembly, as attorney general of New York, and in the U.S. Senate.

And Burr boasted equal accomplishments in the domestic sphere. In 1782, he married Theodosia Prevost, an elegant and graceful widow ten years his senior whom he had met during the war. Burr took great care in the education of their daughter, also named Theodosia, who appears to have been a sort of prodigy, reading and writing by the age of three, and gaining mastery of Latin and Greek by the age of ten. In her education, he was much influenced by Rousseau's *Emile* and Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

So whence his reputation as a rake and villain? Nancy Isenberg blames lazy historians. Since his death Burr has been taken up by what Isenberg calls "imaginative writers: popularizers of history, novelists, playwrights, producers of cheap gothic romances, and even a pornographer." Rather than seeking the true Aaron Burr, Isenberg argues, historians have been taken in by these colorful chronicles: "Even the most recent, and most respected, interpreters of the founding generation have unconsciously mimicked fictional portrayals of Burr. Historians have failed to do the legwork; that is, to read the bulk of Burr's papers on microfilm, scour old newspapers, and track down documents in archives. For too long, prejudiced characterizations of Burr have been repeated as received wisdom." Compounding this problem, Burr's own voice remains faint, unable to rise in his own defense: Many of his papers were lost at sea with his beloved daughter.

There are many possible reasons for Burr's bad reputation, but the overwhelming sense one gets from this book is that

Sarah Bramwell is a writer living in New York.

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Burr's tragic error was to choose neither his adversaries nor his allies wisely. For if Burr made enemies of prominent and powerful men such as Alexander Hamilton, he also made the mistake of repeatedly associating with shady characters. While in the Senate, Burr entered into partnership with a notorious land speculator named James Greenleaf, who betrayed his partners, embezzling funds and landing Burr in gargantuan debt that threatened his future. Later, when he was exploring the newly acquired western lands and planning a filibustering expedition into Spanish territory, Burr worked closely with Gen. James Wilkinson, a man of already questionable character who was later revealed to be a double agent for the Spanish. In an effort to save his own skin, Wilkinson betrayed Burr in a series of letters to President Jefferson, in which he presented doctored "evidence" of a conspiracy to topple the Washington government, take New Orleans, and separate the western states from the Union. Jefferson had Burr arrested, and though Burr was acquitted of treason, the taint of the "Burr Conspiracy" remains to this day.

Even on the strength of Isenberg's book, the reasonable reader will believe Burr did, to some extent, earn his ill repute. A suspiciously large number of important episodes in his life—the election tie of 1800, the Burr–Hamilton duel, the raising of an army in the western territories—are open to varying interpretations. If previous historians have committed the error of overstating Burr's sins, Isenberg probably understates them. The same cannot be said of her treatment of Burr's opponents. One would have hoped that Isenberg—sensitive as she is to the unjust and partisan handling of Aaron Burr by historians—would treat Burr's enemies with subtlety and fairness. Unfortunately, she does not: Isenberg's Hamilton is every bit as vicious, social-climbing, lustful, unscrupulous, and villainous as the worst portrayals of Burr over the centuries.

Part of the conventional wisdom on Burr is that he was an opportunist devoid of principles, both moral and political. Isenberg thus emphasizes his enthusiasm for the ideas of Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, and Bentham. Of course, Burr gained his reputation as a man without ideals because he relished politicking before it was considered appropriate to do so. At a time when individuals did not campaign for office—dispassionately allowing friends to put forward their names and keeping their heads low until Election Day—Burr actively participated in political organizing. (It's interesting that this sort of behavior still earns a reputation for deviltry: Karl Rove, having secured a Republican victory through superior political organization, was portrayed as a sinister mastermind. Rove left Democrats every bit as shocked and indignant as the New York Federalists who were defeated by Burr's Republicans.)

While unconvincing, Isenberg's attempt to portray Burr as an intellectual *is* useful in explaining why he has never quite fit the mold of Founding Father. Burr does not seem to have been interested in debates over the separation of powers, balancing order and liberty, protecting a democratic system from the dangers of faction, and finding the best form of government. Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Bentham: These were radicals more interested in reconstructing society according to their idiosyncratic notions of justice than in "securing" (as the Constitution puts it) the blessings of liberty for posterity. Burr's alien ideology—not his womanizing, or his massive debts, or any other moral flaw—dashes his claim to Founding Fatherhood.

Moreover, even on Isenberg's own evidence, it is plain that Burr did have serious character flaws. These flaws were political rather than sexual or financial. Although it marshals more evidence in defense of Burr than any previous history, *Fallen Founder* does not achieve Burr's total rehabilitation. The man remains an enigma: Might his brand of democracy have posed a danger to the fledgling, disunited republic? It is quite possible that the recently established constitutional order was not ready for the new mode of political organizing that was Burr's legacy, or the mass politics it would usher in. Was Burr a Jacksonian *avant la lettre*, and could the United States, while still in its infancy, have withstood a Jacksonian moment? We will never be able to answer those questions, but the fact that we have to pose them may be reason enough to stifle any lamentation at his downfall. **NR**

■ FILM ■

Dessert Rats

ROSS DOUTHAT

Brad Bird, the animation whiz behind Pixar's *Ratatouille*, deserves all the critical good will in the world. This is a man who spent years building his career by doing hard time on other people's projects, from the sublime (*The Simpsons*) to the embarrassing (*The Fox and the Hound*). When he was finally given his chance to direct, in the late 1990s, he turned out *The Iron Giant*, an unconventional animated fable that reviewers loved but nobody bothered to market; it was buried at the box office, and it was five years before Bird's next project reached theaters. Fortunately for everyone, that film turned out to be *The Incredibles*, which in addition to earning a gazillion dollars also happened to be one of the finest American movies—if not *the* finest American movie—of the new millennium.

No one should be surprised, then, that Bird's *Ratatouille* is in many ways a gorgeous and lively entertainment. The titular rat, Rémy, is a rodent from the French countryside who pines to be a brilliant cook like his idol Gusteau, a jolly, recently deceased celebrity chef whose motto "Anyone can cook" featured prominently in his bestselling cookbooks and daytime TV show. Naturally, fate gives Rémy a chance to try his luck in the kitchen of Gusteau's restaurant, as the hidden paw behind the garbage boy–turned–apprentice chef Alfredo Linguini, a redheaded klutz who couldn't tell escargot from an escalope de veau without Rémy hiding under his tall white hat, pulling on his hair like a puppet master. The unlikely partners dodge various obstacles along the way to culinary success—Rémy's uncomprehending family; Skinner, Alfredo's villainous, diminutive boss (who's bent on using the Gusteau name to market frozen dinners); and the terrifying food critic, Anton Ego, whose first bite of a Rémy-created dish is as

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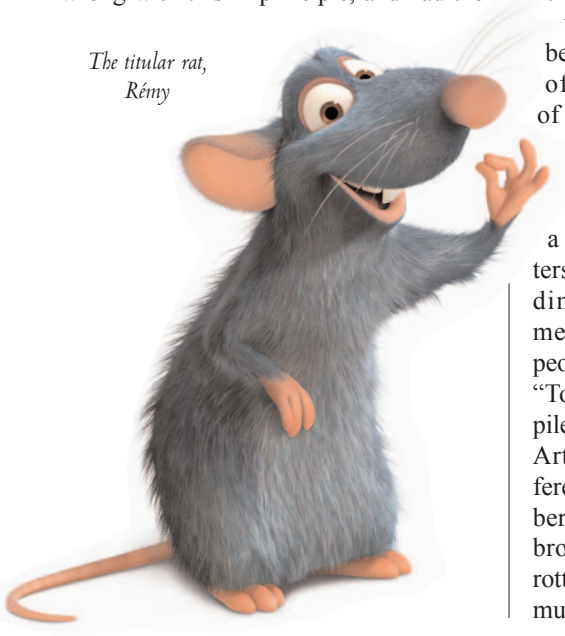
moving a moment as you'll see in cinema this year.

But a moment does not a movie make, and I'm sorry to say that *Ratatouille* is nowhere near as good as you may have been led to believe. It's certainly not "Brad Bird's best movie yet," as Dana Stevens claimed in *Slate*. Nor is it "a nearly flawless piece of popular art," as A. O. Scott suggested in the *New York Times*. I can name all sorts of flaws, in fact, beginning with the way the narrative divides its energy between two protagonists, Rémy and Alfredo, to the detriment of both. Rémy gets the professional arc, the rise from rustic obscurity to Parisian success; Alfredo gets the love story, as romance blossoms between him and a tough-as-nails line cook named Colette (voiced, in the film's most lamentable attempt at a French accent, by Janeane Garofalo). As a result of this split, neither protagonist feels particularly well-rounded, and worse, neither one *develops*; indeed, the only character who changes in any surprising way is Ego the critic, which makes him easily the most engaging figure in the film. (Perhaps that's why reviewers liked it so much.)

You might think, for instance—given Gusteau's motto and all—that this is a movie about an ordinary rat, an anybody from anywhere, who *learns* to be a great cook, but it's nothing of the sort. Like *The Incredibles* before it, *Ratatouille* is a ringing defense of innate talent: Rémy can cook, right from the beginning; Alfredo can't, and never learns. There's nothing wrong with this in principle, and had the movie made Rémy and Alfredo rivals, like the Incredible family and their un-super, gadget-aided antagonist in Bird's last movie (or Mozart and Salieri in *Amadeus*, for that matter), you might have had the makings of a classic film. But by making them partners instead, Bird leeches away much of the drama from a tale whose climax is the preparation of a single perfect dish, since you never doubt that Rémy will be able to pull it off. Worse, in the absence of anyone trying to undermine his gifts (as opposed to just preventing him from exercising them), the rodent gourmand tends toward a wearying pedantry, forever rolling his eyes at the culinary deficiencies of those around him.

Still, his dogged determination to succeed in the human world, and his tangled relationship with the rat family he's leaving behind, at least grants Rémy a certain complexity—whereas Alfredo is a straightforward waste of pixels. He's an incompetent whose only talent, the movie suggests, is waiting tables; he's bumbling and tongue-tied without being particularly endearing, and he looks like Ichabod Crane crossed with a pimply, peach-fuzzed teenager. Colette, his love interest, is none too charming herself, but she's still way too good for this stammering blunderer, whose irritating tics would have driven me to root for the villain—if, that is, the sinister Skinner were anything more than a cardboard baddie, all sneers and plots and ranting self-pity.

I'm making *Ratatouille* sound worse than it is: The movie is beautiful in a way that no Pixar effort has been; its animation has a depth and detail that has to be seen to be believed, and Bird's vision of Paris is as lovely as any portrait of that city in recent cinema. But amid so much critical fawning, someone needs to point out that all this great work has been placed in the service of a pair of underdeveloped lead characters; an unappealing love interest; a one-dimensional villain; and a muddled message—anyone can cook, but most people can't—at the heart of everything. "To create a realistic-looking compost pile," Wikipedia reports of the film, "the Art Department photographed 15 different kinds of produce, such as apples, berries, bananas, mushrooms, oranges, broccoli, and lettuce, in the process of rotting." Would that they had lavished so much attention on the script. **NR**



The titular rat, Rémy

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■ CITY DESK ■

Man of Iron

RICHARD BROOKHISER

IRONMAN competitions bring fitness freaks to the world's pleasure spots to swim, run, and cycle. In summer everyone leaves the city for the country or the beach by Friday at the latest, so cocktail parties jam up in mid-week. This summer I competed in a Manhattan cocktail-party ironman, completing three in one evening.

As with physical ironman competitions, preparation is important. First, study a street map. Manhattan is a simple grid, except where it isn't, and two of my parties were below 14th Street. You barely remember which direction the one-way streets down there run yourself; Mohammed from Karachi will have no idea. Refresh your memory, and prepare to walk. Second, dress accordingly. Fortunately the skies were clear; rain gear would have added another degree of difficulty. Keep it cool; no one has less charm than a red-faced blowfish, puffing from a hot stroll. This is no time for special shoes; if you catch an Italian toe on a Belgian block, you may be out of commission. Remember to go easy on the alcohol and the snacks: it's all free, and the catering will be nice, but you're eating and drinking for three.

The first cocktail party was on 23rd Street, over a former YMCA, now a David Barton gym. Half-naked straight women and gay men parade in and out, but you are enrolled in the other ironman competition, so you enter the still un-constructed lobby. A party planner is there with a clipboard, to tick you off the list, and make sure you don't step in spackle or electrocute yourself. Half a dozen floors up, you see the fruits of the contractors' labors: a sweeping loft space, an airy aerie with 20-foot ceilings. Tall, slim windows give a Childe Hassam–angle view of the street scene; the light wood floor greets the evening sunlight like a long lost brother. The hors d'oeuvres here are truly fine, little Limoges boxes of rice paper, tips of shoots, thin uncooked slices of the beasts of the earth and of the sea; or, in a friendly wave to the Middle Kingdom, the same animals, deep fried and sprinkled with seeds or peanut shavings. It is really too bad I cannot eat more of them, but I stay with my training. I greet the guest of honor, and thank the hostess twice, coming and going.

I take a taxi straight down Seventh Avenue. Two little blocks off a star-like intersection (from traffic and discount stores, to trees) is the second cocktail party. It is being held in a restaurant that used to be a Greenwich Village landmark. It called itself an inn, I think inaccurately; it may have been a tavern in the Polk administration. For many years it incarnated a trait of New Yorkers, and bohemians, which is insufficiently remarked: their nostalgia for the quaint. In a city built on creative destruction, and a counterculture dedicated to making it new, plutocrats and poets alike could get sentimental about Old New York. The little inn catered to that sentiment at its best: fireplaces in the winter; dim lights; dark booths; simple American dishes (chicken pot pie). Madame Olenska never stayed there, but it was pleasant to imagine that she had. But for the last few years it has been under new management. What has become of it?

This summer I competed in a Manhattan cocktail-party ironman, completing three in one evening.

The new owner, a planet in the solar system of journalism, is someone I have known for years. (I blurbed a book by one of his employees, hence my invitation to this party.) He wanted a place in his neighborhood where he would like to go, so he bought the little inn and transformed it. It has no phone number; the menu is called a "Preview Menu." Preview of what? I asked. Well, we're not open yet, I was told. It may not be open, but everyone who is anyone goes there. (NB: "Anyone," in this context, means Johnny Depp, not me.) They still serve chicken pot pie, though the price has gone up. A famous cartoonist has done a mural of famous Village people of the past: I recognize Eugene O'Neill, and a naked woman I take to be Dorothy Parker (Edna St. Vincent Millay would have longer hair). Quaint is gone with the wind; this is quaint in quotes, which is to say chic.

Since this is a book party, I seem to know everybody. The editor of the book I have blurbed tells me he edited another, which I also blurbed. Typical writer, I hadn't studied the title page; that's why we have agents. Another acquaintance is doing a book on George W. Bush. He has a startling approach: He will not beat him with cattle prods, or at least only in every other chapter. I wish him luck; there is a First Amendment, but still. I congratulate author and owner on book and *boîte*.

The third cocktail party is in the Meatpacking District. Twenty years ago, the only place here that didn't deal in sirloin or prostitution was one all-night bistro. Now, thanks to prosperity and a weak dollar, it roars with Europeans. I make my way through the surf, to a bar named for one of the religious saviors of mankind. His statue, three times life size, looms over one end. (Hint: He is not the Prophet.) The host of this event, the finish line of my ironman competition, is a publication with a large invitation list. Everyone has come. We are in a room the size of a train station, and it is rush hour. It is an image of successful striving, or collective folly, or both. In the crush it is impossible to hear or see. But I do want to greet the editor in chief (that is the reason to come), so I place myself below the savior, hoping he will pass. He does. In the gloaming, my last cab takes me home, victorious. All have run, all have prizes. Next ironman: office Christmas parties. NR

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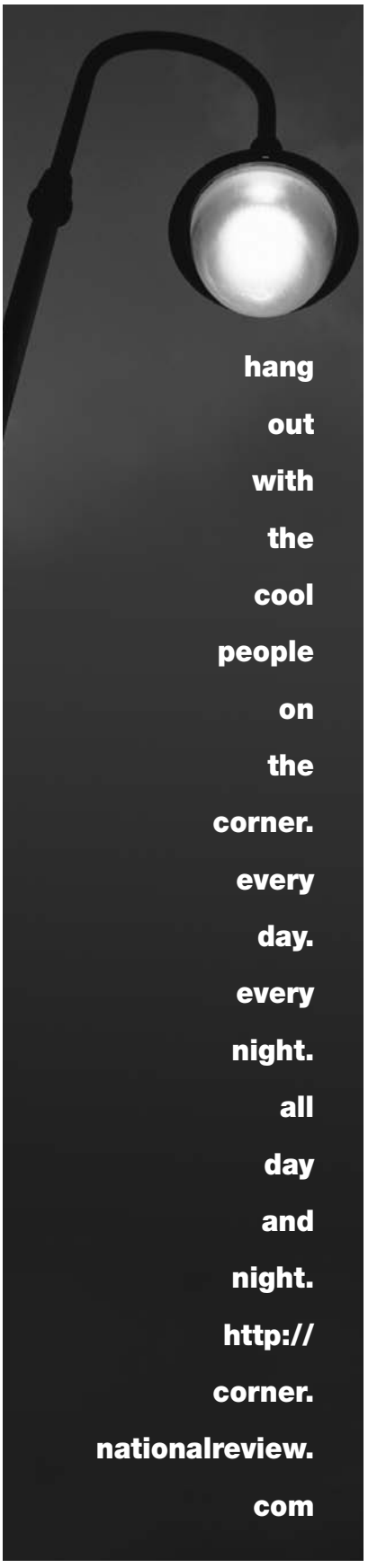

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Denial Is a River in Washington, and London

"Any attempt to identify a murderous ideology with a great faith such as Islam is wrong, and needs to be denied," declared Jacqui Smith, the new British home secretary, starting her job with a bang, or near-bang, as a flaming Jeep Cherokee (doing a fine impression of a Chevy Blazer) crashed through the terminal at Glasgow Airport, with one of its passengers staggering from the wreckage screaming, "Allah! Allah!" Two days later, nine persons, including seven Spanish tourists, were killed by a somewhat more efficient suicide bomber in Yemen.

Nevertheless, the new British prime minister, Gordon Brown, has banned ministers from using the word "Muslim" in connection with terrorism. As the *Daily Express* reported, "The shake-up is part of a fresh attempt to improve community relations and avoid offending Muslims."

The world's prime ministers and presidents have been "avoiding offending Muslims" for five years now. The first reaction of almost every Western leader to September 11th was to leap in the limo and hie himself to the nearest mosque. As President Bush said the other day in a return visit to the Saudi-funded Islamic Center of Washington, "To underscore America's respect for the Muslim faith here at home, I came to this Center six days after the 9/11 attacks to denounce incidents of prejudice against Muslim Americans."

It wasn't entirely clear that there ever were significant "incidents of prejudice against Muslim Americans," and among those assembled for the president's post-9/11 Islamoschmoozing sessions there were more than a few chaps with a long track record of prejudice against non-Muslims.

You'll recall that Mr. Bush's line back then was that "Islam is peace." The president is not to my knowledge a practicing imam. (I would hesitate to issue so definitive a pronouncement about the Prince of Wales.) So it is not clear on what authority the infidel-in-chief issues such statements. But a good basic rule in those early days was: Whether or not "Islam is peace," whenever Mr. Bush says it is, the particular Muslims in his immediate vicinity are not the best exemplars of it.

At the prayer service at the National Cathedral on September 14, 2001, the principal representative of the religion of peace, Muzammil Siddiqi, could muster only the vaguest, most imprecise condemnation of terrorism. Which is hardly surprising given his track record of support for Hamas and Hezbollah. Another honored guest, Abdurahman Alamoudi, a longtime adviser to the Pentagon, founder of the organization that supplies Muslim chaplains to the U.S. armed forces, and designer of a course on Islam taught in the California school system, is now serving a 23-year jail term for his part in a Libyan terror plot.

There are many peaceful Muslims, but not always the ones in the presidential photo-ops. CAIR's head honcho has made admirably plain his ambition to live under sharia in the United States: The followers of the religion of peace, in that sense, share exactly the same goals as their more incendiary coreligionists.

For his encore performance at the Islamic Center, President Bush was betting on the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a sort of European Union or British Commonwealth for 57 of the world's Muslim nations. He announced that America would be appointing its first ever envoy to the OIC, who "will listen to and learn from representatives from Muslim states and will share with them America's views and values."

Just for starters, try to imagine an "Organization of the Christian Conference," with presidents and prime ministers meeting at summits. Those lefties who profess concern for what America is doing to provoke "the Muslim world" would go bananas if any Western politician started referring to "the Christian world." The fact that one formulation slips off their tongue so carelessly while the other would cause them to gag on their words is a revealing example of how easily Western secularists accept Islam's political sovereignty.

And to put it another way: Regardless of whether Islam is a religion of peace, is it a politics of peace? The Organization of the Islamic Conference is the largest bloc on the new U.N. Human Rights Council, which explains why that pitiful joke of a transnational body does nothing for human rights. True, the OIC issued a "Declaration on International Terrorism" in 2002, and it's fine as far as it goes, which would seem to be as far as the Baader-Meinhof Gang and the Red Brigades:

"5. We reject any attempt to link Islam and Muslims to terrorism as terrorism has no association with any religion, civilization or nationality;"

Fine. Whatever. Religion-of-peace boilerplate.

"10. We reject any attempt to link terrorism to the struggle of the Palestinian people in the exercise of their inalienable right to establish their independent state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital;"

Er, okay. That gives a pass to Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and whatnot . . .

"11. We reject any attempt to associate Islamic states or Palestinian and Lebanese resistance with terrorism, which constitutes an impediment to the global struggle against terrorism;"

. . . and that pretty much absolves Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and everybody else. So are there any actual terrorists operating anywhere today that this "International Declaration" is designed to cover?

"12. We condemn Israel for its escalating . . ."

Of course.

Somewhere out there, there may well be an Islam that's a bona fide "religion of peace," but it's not to be found among the shifty dissemblers of the OIC. Six years into the "War on Terror," if we have learned anything, it should be the impossibility of trying to win without taking on the ideology. The president should not be fawning on the OIC, he should be disabusing them of their illusions.

Instead, we continue to embrace them. Jacqui Smith wants any link between terrorism and Islam to be "denied." Just because denial is a river in Egypt is no reason it can't be diverted into the Thames and the Potomac. **NR**

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